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THE LIFE

OF THE

REV. JOHN WESLEY, A. M.

SOMETIME FELLOW OF LINCOLN COLLEGE, OXFORD,

AND

FOUNDER OF THE METHODIST SOCIETIES.

BY RICHARD WATSON.

Εν κόποις περισσοτέρως.—CORINTHIANS.

WITH

NOTES AND TRANSLATIONS, BY THE AUTHOR.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

VARIOUS Lives, or Memoirs, of the founder of Methodism have already been laid before the public. But it has been frequently remarked that such of these as contain the most approved accounts of Mr. Wesley, have been carried out to a length which obstructs their circulation, by the intermixture of details comparatively uninteresting beyond the immediate circle of Wesleyan Methodism. The present Life, therefore, without any design to supersede larger publications, has been prepared with more special reference to general readers. But, as it is contracted within moderate limits chiefly by the exclusion of extraneous matter, it will, it is hoped, be found sufficiently comprehensive to give the reader an adequate view of the life, labors and opinions of the eminent individual who is its subject; and to afford the means of correcting the most material errors and misrepresentations which have had currency respecting him. On several points the author has had the advantage of consulting unpublished papers, not known to preceding biographers, and which have enabled him to place some particulars in a more satisfactory light.

LONDON, May 10.

LIFE OF THE REV. JOHN WESLEY.

CHAPTER I.

JOHN and CHARLES WESLEY, the chief founders of that religious body now commonly known by the name of the Wesleyan Methodists, were the sons of the Rev. Samuel Wesley, rector of Epworth, in Lincolnshire.

Of this clergyman, and his wife, Mrs. Susannah Wesley, who was the daughter of the Rev. Dr. Annesley, as well as the ancestors of both, an interesting account will be found in Dr. Adam Clarke's "Memoirs of the Wesley Family," and in the "Life of Mr. John Wesley," by Dr. Whitehead, and in the more recent one by Mr. Moore. They will be noticed here only so far as a general knowledge of their character may be necessary to assist our judgment as to the opinions and conduct of their more celebrated sons.

The rector of Epworth, like his excellent wife, had descended from parents distinguished for learning, piety, and non-conformity. His father dying whilst he was young, he forsook the Dissenters at an early period of life; and his conversion carried him into high church principles, and political toryism. He was not, however, so rigid in the former as to prevent him from encouraging the early zeal of his sons, John and Charles, at Oxford, although it was even then somewhat irregular, when tried by the strictest rules of church order and custom; and his toryism, sufficiently high in theory, was yet of that class which regarded the rights of the subject tenderly in practice. He refused flattering overtures made by the adherents of James II., to induce him to support the measures of the court, and wrote in favor of the revolution of 1688; admiring it, probably, less in a political view, than as rescuing a protestant church from the dangerous influence of a popish head. For this service, he was presented with the living of Epworth, in Lincolnshire, to which, a few years afterwards, was added that of Wroote, in the same county.

He held the living of Epworth upwards of forty years, and was distinguished for the zeal and fidelity with which he discharged his parish duties. Of his talents and learning, his remaining works afford honorable evidence.

Mrs. Susannah Wesley, the mother of Mr. John Wesley, was, as might be expected from the eminent character of Dr. Samuel Annesley, her father, educated with great care. Like her husband, she also, at an early period of life, renounced nonconformity, and became a member of the established church, after, as her biographers tell us, she had read and mastered the whole controversy on the subject of separation; of which, however, great as were her natural and acquired talents, she must, at the age of thirteen years, have been a very imperfect judge. The serious habits impressed upon both by their education, did not forsake them;—"they feared God, and wrought righteousness;" but we may perhaps account for that obscurity in the views of each on several great points of evangelical religion, and especially on justification by faith, and the offices of the Holy Spirit, which hung over their minds for many years, and indeed, till towards the close of life, from this early change of their religious connections. Their theological reading, according to the fashion of the church people of that day, was now directed rather to the writings of those divines of the English church who were tinctured more or less with a Pelagianized Arminianism, than to the works of its founders; their successors the puritans, or of those eminent men among the non-conformists, whose views of discipline they had renounced. They had parted with Calvinism; but, like many others, they renounced with it, for want of spiritual discrimination, those truths which were as fully maintained in the theology of Arminius, and in that of their eminent son, who revived, and more fully illustrated it, as in the writings of the most judicious and spiritual Calvinistic divines themselves. Taylor, Tillotson, and Bull, who became their oracles, were Arminians of a different class.

The advantage of such a parentage to the Wesleys was great. From their earliest years they had an example in the father of all that could render a clergyman respectable and influential; and, in the mother there was a sanctified wisdom, a masculine understanding, and an acquired knowledge, which they regarded with just deference after they became men and scholars. The influence of a piety so steadfast and uniform, joined to such qualities, and softened by maternal tenderness, could scarcely fail to produce effect. The firm and manly character, the practical sense, the active and unwearied habits of the father, with the calm, reflecting, and stable qualities of the mother, were in particular inherited by Mr. John Wesley; and in him were most happily blended. A large portion of the ecclesiastical principles and prejudices of the rector of Epworth was also transmitted to his three sons; but whilst Samuel and Charles retained them least impaired, in John, as we shall see, they sustained in future life considerable modifications.

Samuel, the eldest son, was born in 1692; John, in 1703; and Charles, in 1708.

Samuel Wesley, junior, was educated at Westminster School; and in 1711 was elected to Christ Church, Oxford. He was eminent for his learning, and was an excellent poet, with great power of satire, and an elegant wit. He held a considerable rank among the literary men of the day, and finally settled as head master of the free school of Tiverton, in Devonshire, where he died in 1739, in his forty-ninth year.

Mrs. Wesley was the instructress of her children in their early years. "I can find," says Dr. Whitehead, "no evidence that the boys were ever put to any school in the country; their mother having a very bad opinion of the common methods of instructing and governing children." She was particularly led, it would seem, to interest herself in John, who, when he was about six years old, had a providential and singular escape from being burned to death, upon the parsonage house being consumed. There is a striking passage in one of her private meditations, which contains a reference to this event;* and indicates that she considered it as laying her under a special obligation "to be more particularly careful of the soul of a child whom God had so mercifully provided for." The effect of this special care on the part of the mother was, that, under the divine blessing, he became early serious; for at the age of eight years, he was admitted by his father to partake of the sacrament. In 1714, he was placed at the Charter House, "where he was noticed for his diligence and progress in learning."† "Here, for his quietness, regularity, and application, he became

* The memory of his deliverance, on this occasion, is preserved in one of his early portraits, which has, below the head, the representation of a house in flames, with the motto, "Is not this a brand plucked from the burning?"

† Whitehead's Life.

a favorite with the master, Dr. Walker; and through life he retained so great a predilection for the place, that on his annual visit to London, he made it a custom to walk through the scene of his boyhood. To most men, every year would render a pilgrimage of this kind more painful than the last; but Wesley seems never to have looked back with melancholy upon the days that were gone; earthly regrets of this kind could find no room in one who was continually pressing onward to the goal."* When he had attained his seventeenth year, he was elected to Christ Church, Oxford, "where he pursued his studies with great advantage, I believe under the direction of Dr. Wigan, a gentleman eminent for his classical knowledge. Mr. Wesley's natural temper in his youth was gay and sprightly, with a turn for wit and humor.—When he was about twenty-one years of age, "he appeared," as Mr. Badcock has observed, "the very sensible and acute collegian; a young fellow of the finest classical taste, of the most liberal and manly sentiments."† His perfect knowledge of the classics gave a smooth polish to his wit, and an air of superior elegance to all his compositions. He had already begun to amuse himself occasionally with writing verses, though most of his poetical pieces, at this period, were, I believe, either imitations or translations of the Latin. Some time in this year, however, he wrote an imitation of the sixty-fifth Psalm, which he sent to his father, who says, "I like your verses on the sixty-fifth Psalm; and would not have you bury your talent."‡

Some time after this, when purposing to take deacon's orders, he was roused from the religious carelessness into which he had fallen at college, and applied himself diligently to the reading of divinity. This more thoughtful frame appears to have been indicated in his letters to his mother, with whom he kept up a regular correspondence; for she replies, "The alteration of your temper has occasioned me much speculation. I, who am apt to be sanguine, hope it may proceed from the operations of God's Holy Spirit, that, by taking off your relish for earthly enjoyments, he may prepare and dispose your mind for a more serious and close application to things of a more sublime and spiritual nature. If it be so, happy are you if you cherish those dispositions; and now, in good earnest, resolve to make religion the business of your life; for, after all, that is the one thing which, strictly speaking, is necessary: all things beside are comparatively little to the purposes of life. I heartily wish you would now enter upon a strict examination of yourself, that you may know, whether you have a reasonable hope of salvation by Jesus Christ. If you have, the satisfaction of knowing it will abundantly reward your pains; if you have not, you will find a more reasonable occasion for tears than can be met with in a tragedy. This matter deserves great consideration by all, but especially by those designed for the ministry; who ought, above all things, to make their own calling and election sure; lest, after they have preached to others, they themselves should be cast away."

This excellent advice was not lost upon him; and indeed his mother's admirable letters were among the principal means, under God, of producing that still more decided change in his views which soon afterwards began to display itself. He was now about twenty-two years of age.

The practical books most read by him at this period, which was probably employed as a course of preparation for holy orders, were, "The Christian's Pattern," by Thomas a Kempis; and Bishop Taylor's "Rules of Holy Living and Dying;" and his correspondence with his parents respecting these authors, shows how carefully he was weighing their merits, and investigating their meaning, as regarding them in the light of spiritual instructers. The letters of his mother on the points offered to her consideration by her son, show, in many respects, a deeply thinking and discriminating mind; but they are also in proof that both she and her husband had given up their acquaintance, if they ever had any, with works which might have been recommended as much more suitable to the state of their son's mind, and far superior as a directory to true Christianity. This to him would have been infinitely more important than discussing the peculiar views, and adjusting the proportion of excellency and defect, which may be found in such a writer as Kempis, whose "Christian's Pattern" is, where in reality excellent, a manual rather for him who is a Christian already, than for him who is seeking to become one.

A few things are however to be remarked in this correspondence which are of considerable interest, as showing the bearings of Mr. Wesley's views as to those truths of which he afterwards obtained a satisfactory conviction, and then so clearly stated and defended.

The son, in writing to his mother on Bishop Taylor's book, states several particulars which Bishop Taylor makes necessary parts of humility and repentance; one of which, in reference to humility, is, that "we must be sure, in some sense or other, to think ourselves the worst in every company where we come." And in treating of repentance he says, "Whether God has forgiven us, or no, we know not; therefore be sorrowful for ever having sinned." "I take the more notice of this last sentence," says Mr. Wesley, "because it seems to contradict his own words in the next section, where he says, that by the Lord's supper all the members are united to one another, and to Christ the head. The Holy Ghost confers on us the graces necessary for, and our souls receive the seeds of, an immortal nature. Now, surely these graces are not of so little force as that we cannot perceive whether we have them, or not: if we dwell in Christ, and Christ in us, which he will not do unless we are regenerate, certainly we must be sensible of it. If we can never have any certainty of our being in a state of salvation, good reason it is that every moment should be spent, not in joy, but in fear and trembling; and then undoubtedly, in this life, we are of all men most miserable. God deliver us from such a fearful expectation as this! Humility is, undoubtedly, necessary to salvation; and if all these things are essential to humility, who can be humble? who can be saved?"

The mother, in reply, suggests to him some good thoughts and useful distinctions on the subject of humility; but omits to afford him any assistance on the point of the possibility of obtaining a comfortable persuasion of being in a state of salvation, through the influence of the Holy Spirit; which he already discerned to be the privilege of a real believer, though as yet he was greatly perplexed as to the means of obtaining it. At this period too he makes the important distinction between assurance of present, and assurance of future, salvation; by confounding which, so many, from their objection to the Calvinistic notion of the infallible perseverance of the saints, have given up the doctrine of assurance altogether. "That we can never be so certain of the pardon of our sins, as to be assured they will never rise up against us, I firmly believe. We know that they will infallibly do so if ever we apostatize; and I am not satisfied what evidence there can be of our final perseverance, till we have finished our course.

* Southey's Life. † Westminster Magazine.
‡ Whitehead's Life.

But I am persuaded we may know if we are now in a state of salvation, since that is expressly promised in the Holy Scriptures to our sincere endeavors; and we are surely able to judge of our own sincerity."

The latter part of this extract will, however, show how much he had yet to learn as to "the way to the Father." Mrs. Wesley also corrects a defective definition of faith, which her son's letter had contained, in the following sensible remarks; which are just, as far as they go, but below the true scriptural standard, and the proper conception of that saving faith after which her son was inquiring; "You are somewhat mistaken in your notions of faith. All faith is an assent, but all assent is not faith. Some truths are self-evident, and we assent to them because they are so. Others, after a regular and formal process of reason by way of deduction from some self-evident principle, gain our assent. This is not properly faith, but science. Some again we assent to, not because they are self-evident, or because we have attained the knowledge of them in a regular method by a train of arguments, but because they have been revealed to us, either by God or man; and these are the proper objects of faith. The true measure of faith is the authority of the revealer; the weight of which always holds proportion to our conviction of his ability and integrity. Divine faith is an assent to whatever God has revealed to us, because he has revealed it."

Predestination was another subject touched upon in this interesting correspondence. Mr. Wesley was probably led to it by his review of the articles of the church previous to his ordination; and he thus expresses himself on this controverted subject: "What then shall I say of predestination? An everlasting purpose of God to deliver some from damnation, does, I suppose, exclude all from that deliverance who are not chosen. And if it was inevitably decreed from eternity, that such a determinate part of mankind should be saved, and none beside them, a vast majority of the world were only born to eternal death, without so much as a possibility of avoiding it How is this consistent with either the divine justice or mercy? Is it merciful to ordain a creature to everlasting misery? Is it just to punish a man for crimes which he could not but commit? That God should be the author of sin and injustice, which must, I think, be the consequence of maintaining this opinion, is a contradiction to the clearest ideas we have of the divine nature and perfections." *

From these views he never departed; and the terms he uses contain indeed the only rational statement of the whole question.

He was ordained deacon in September, 1725, and the year following was elected fellow of Lincoln college. His previous seriousness had been the subject of much banter and ridicule, and appears to have been urged against him, in the election, by his opponents; but his reputation for learning and diligence, and the excellence of his character, triumphed; and, what was probably to him the greatest pleasure, he had the gratification of seeing the joy this event gave to his venerable parents, and which was emphatically expressed in their letters. Several specimens of his poetry, composed about this time, are given by his biographers, which show that, had he cultivated that department of literature, he would not have occupied an inferior place among the tasteful and elegant votaries of verse; but he soon found more serious and more useful employment.

He spent the summer after his election to the fellowship, with his parents, in Lincolnshire, and took that opportunity of conversing with them at large upon those serious topics which then fully occupied his mind. In September, he returned to Oxford, and resumed his usual studies. "His literary character was now established in the university; he was acknowledged by all parties to be a man of talents, and an excellent critic in the learned languages. His compositions were distinguished by an elegant simplicity of style, and justness of thought, that strongly marked the excellence of his classical taste. His skill in logic, or the art of reasoning, was universally known and admired. The high opinion that was entertained of him in these respects was soon publicly expressed, by choosing him Greek lecturer, and moderator of the classes, on the seventh of November; though he had only been elected fellow of the college in March, was little more than twenty-three years of age, and had not proceeded master of arts." * He took this degree in February, 1727; became his father's curate in August the same year; returned to Oxford in 1728, to obtain priest's orders; and paid another visit to Oxford in 1729; where during his stay, he attended the meetings of a small society formed by his brother Charles, Mr. Morgan, and a few others, to assist each other in their studies, and to consult how to employ their time to the best advantage. After about a month, he returned to Epworth; but upon Dr. Morley, the rector of his college, requiring his residence, he quitted his father's curacy, and in November again settled in Oxford. He now obtained pupils, and became tutor in the college; presided as moderator in the disputations six times a-week; and had the chief direction of a religious society. From this time he stood more prominently forward in his religious character, and in efforts to do good to others; and began more fully to prove that "they that will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution." It is however necessary to turn to the history of Mr. Charles Wesley, whose labors in the early periods of Methodism were inferior only to those of his brother.

Charles Wesley was, as above stated, five years younger than his brother John; and was educated at Westminster school, under his eldest brother, Samuel, from whom he is said to have derived a still stronger tincture of high church principles than was imbibed under the paternal roof. "When he had been some years at school, Mr. R. Wesley, a gentleman of large fortune in Ireland, wrote to his father, and asked if he had any son named Charles; if so, he would make him his heir. Accordingly, a gentleman in London brought money for his education several years. But one year another gentleman called, probably Mr. Wesley himself, talked largely with him, and asked if he was willing to go with him to Ireland. Mr. Charles desired to write to his father, who answered immediately, and referred it to his own choice. He chose to stay in England." † "Mr. John Wesley, in his account of his brother, calls this a fair escape. The fact is more remarkable than he was aware of; for the person who inherited the property intended for Charles Wesley, and who took the name of Wesley, or Wellesley, in consequence, was the first earl of Mornington, grandfather of Marquis Wellesley and the duke of Wellington." ‡

The lively disposition of Charles, although he pursued his studies diligently, and was unblameable in his conduct, repelled all those exhortations to a more strictly religious course, which John seriously urged upon him, after he was elected to Christ's Church. During his brother's absence, as

* Whitehead's Life.

* Whitehead's Life.
† Whitehead's Life, vol. i. p. 98.
‡ Southey's Life.

his father's curate, his letters, however, became more grave; and when Mr. John Wesley returned to Oxford, in November, 1729, "I found him," he observes, "in great earnestness to save his soul." His own account of himself is, that he lost his first year at college in diversions; that the next, he set himself to study; that diligence led him into serious thinking; that he went to the weekly sacrament, persuading two or three students to accompany him; and that he observed the method of study prescribed by the statutes of the university. "This," says he, "gained me the harmless name of *Methodist*."* Thus it appears that Charles was the first modern Methodist, and that he in fact laid the foundations of the religious society which continues to be distinguished by that appellation. To this society Mr. John Wesley joined himself on his return to reside at Oxford; and by his influence and energy gave additional vigor to their exertions, to promote their own spiritual improvement, and the good of others. The union of system and efficiency which this association presented, well accorded with his practical and governing mind; and, no doubt, under the leadings of a superior agency, of which he was unconscious, he was thus training himself to those habits of regular and influential exertion and enterprize which subsequently rendered him the instrument of a revival of religion throughout the land. Of the little society which, by the mere force of his character, he thus became the head, Mr. Hervey, the author of the "Meditations," and the celebrated Whitefield, were members.

CHAPTER II.

The strictly religious profession which Mr. Wesley must now be considered as making at Oxford—a profession so strongly marked as to become matter of public notice, and accompanied with so much zeal as to excite both ridicule and opposition, requires to be carefully examined. After all, he thought himself to be but "almost," and not "altogether," a Christian—a conclusion of a very perplexing kind to many who have set up themselves for better judges in his case than he himself. From a similar cause, we have seen St. Paul all but reproved by some divines, for representing himself "as the chief of sinners," at the time when he was "blameless" as to "the righteousness of the law;" and, but for the courtesy due to an inspired man, he would, probably, in direct contradiction to his own words, have been pronounced the chief of saints; although his heart remained a total stranger to humility and charity.

The Wesleys at Oxford were indeed not only in a *higher*, but in an *essentially different* state of religious experience from that of Saul of Tarsus, notwithstanding his array of legal zeal and external virtue; but if our views of personal religion must be taken from the New Testament, although as to men they were blameless and exemplary, yet, in respect to God, those internal changes had not taken place in them, which it is the office of real Christianity to effect. They were, however, most sincere; they were "faithful in that which is little," and God gave them "the true riches." They "sought God with all their heart;" and they ultimately found him, but in a way which at that time "they knew not." The very writers, Bishop Taylor, and Mr. Law, who so powerfully wrought upon their consciences, were among the most erring guides to that "peace of God which passeth all understanding," for which they sighed; and those celebrated divines, excelled by none for genius and eloquence, who could draw the picture of a practical piety so copious and exact in its external manifestations, were unable to teach that mystic connection of the branches with the vine, from which the only fruits which are of healthy growth and genuine flavor can proceed. Both are too defective in their views of faith, and of its object, the atonement of Christ, to be able to direct a penitent and troubled spirit into the way of salvation, and to show how all the principles and acts of truly Christian piety, are sustained by a life of "faith in the Son of God." To this subject, however, Mr. Wesley's own account of himself will, subsequently, again call our attention.

Bishop Taylor's chapter on purity of intention, first convinced Mr. Wesley of the necessity of being holy in heart, as well as regular in his outward conduct; and having, for the first time, formed an acquaintance with a religious friend, "he began to alter the whole form of his conversation, and to set in earnest upon a new life." "He communicated every week. He watched against all sin, whether in word or deed, and began to aim at, and pray for, inward holiness;"* but still with a painful consciousness that he found not that which he so earnestly sought. His error, at this period, was drawn from his theological guides just mentioned; he either confounded sanctification with justification, that is, a real with a relative change, or he regarded sanctification as a preparation for, and a condition of justification. He had not yet learned the apostle's doctrine, the gratuitous justification of "the ungodly," when penitent, and upon the sole condition of believing in Christ; nor that upon this there *follows* a "death" unto all inward and outward sin; so that he who is so justified can "no longer continue therein." It is, however, deeply interesting, to trace the progress of his mind through its agitations, inquiries, hopes, and fears, until the moment when he found that steadfast peace which never afterwards forsook him, but gave serenity to his countenance, and cheerfulness to his heart, to the last hour of a prolonged life.

The effects of the strong impression which had been made upon him by the practical writings of Taylor and Law promptly manifested themselves. The discipline he maintained, as a tutor over his

* From the name of an ancient sect of physicians, say some of Mr. Wesley's biographers; but probably the wits of Oxford, who imposed the name, knew nothing of that sect of the middle ages. The non-conformists were often called in derision, Methodists; and the name was probably transmitted from them; or it might be given merely from the rigid adherence to method in study by Mr. Charles Wesley. It is, however, somewhat worthy of notice, that before the times of non-conformity, properly so called, we find Methodists mentioned as one of the minor sects in conjunction with the Anabaptists; for, as early as 1639, in a sermon preached at Lambeth, they are rated in good set style for their aversion to rhetorical sermons:—"Where are now our Anabaptists, and *plain pack-staff Methodists*, who esteem all flowers of rhetoric in sermons no better than stinking weeds, and of all elegancies of speech, no better than profane spells?" &c. Their fault in those days, it appears, was to prefer plain preaching; no bad compliment, though an undesigned one. The epithet used to describe them, may also intimate that they were *plain* in dress and manners. At a later period, 1693, some of the non-conformists, who had renounced the imputation of Christ's righteousness in justification, except in the merit of it, and whose views were somewhat similar to those of the Wesleyan Methodists, on the imputation of faith for righteousness, were called by their brethren, the New Methodists. They were not however a sect, but were so denominated from the new method which they took in stating the doctrine of justification. Thus we have a Calvinistic pamphlet, under this date, written against "the principles of the *New Methodists* in the great point of justification."

* Journal.

pupils, was more strict than the university had been accustomed to witness; and for this reason, that it was more deeply and comprehensively conscientious. He regarded himself as responsible to God for exerting himself to his utmost, not only to promote their learning, but to regulate their moral habits, and to form their religious principles. Here his disciplinary habits had their first manifestation. He required them to rise very early; he directed their reading, and controlled their general conduct, by rules to which he exacted entire obedience. This was not well taken by the friends of some; but from others he received very grateful letters; and several of his pupils themselves were not insensible of the obligations they owed to him, not only on a religious account, but for thus enabling them to reap the full advantages of that seat of learning, by restraining them from its dissipations.

The little society of Methodists, as they were called, began now to extend its operations. When Mr. Wesley joined them, they committed its management to him, and he has himself stated its original members:—

"In November, 1729, four young gentlemen of Oxford, Mr. John Wesley, Fellow of Lincoln college; Mr. Charles Wesley, student of Christ's Church; Mr. Morgan, commoner of Christ's Church; and Mr. Kirkman, of Merton college, began to spend some evenings in a week together, in reading chiefly the Greek Testament. The next year, two or three of Mr. John Wesley's pupils desired the liberty of meeting with them; and afterwards one of Mr. Charles Wesley's pupils. It was in 1732 that Mr. Ingham, of Queen's college, and Mr. Broughton, of Exeter, were added to their number. To these, in April, was joined Mr. Clayton, of Brazennose, with two or three of his pupils. About the same time Mr. James Hervey was permitted to meet with them, and afterwards Mr. Whitefield."*

Mr. Morgan led the way to their visiting the prisoners in the Oxford jail, for the purpose of affording them religious instruction. They afterwards resolved to spend two or three hours a-week in visiting and relieving the poor and the sick, generally, where the parish ministers did not object to it. This was, however, so novel a practice, and might be deemed by some so contrary to church order, that Mr. Wesley consulted his father upon the point. Mr. Wesley, senior, answered the inquiry in a noble letter, equally honorable to his feelings as a father, and a minister of Christ. They had his full sanction for prosecuting their pious labors; he blessed God who had given him two sons together at Oxford, who had received grace and courage to turn the war against the world and the devil; he bids them defy reproach, and animates them in God's name to go on in the path to which their Saviour had directed them. At the same time, he advises them to consult with the chaplain of the prison, and to obtain the approbation of the bishop. This high sanction was obtained; but it was not sufficient to screen them from the rebukes of the gravely lukewarm, or the malignantly vicious. Sarcasm and serious opposition robbed them of one of their number, who had not fortitude to bear the shafts of ridicule, or to resist the persuasion of friends; and the opposition being now headed by some persons of influence, Mr. Wesley had again recourse, by letter, to his father's counsel. The answer deserves to be transcribed at length:—

"This day I received both yours, and this evening, in the course of our reading, I thought I found an answer, that would be more proper, than any I myself could dictate; though since it will not be easily translated, I send it in the original.

* Journal.

Πολλή μοι καύχησις ὑπὲρ ὑμων· πεπλήρωμαι τη παρακλήσει· ὑπερπερισσεύομαι τη χαρᾳ.* What would you be? Would you be angels? I question whether a mortal can arrive to a greater degree of perfection than steadily to do good, and for that very reason patiently and meekly to suffer evil. For my part, on the present view of your actions and designs, my daily prayers are, that God would keep you humble; and then I am sure that if you continue "to suffer for righteousness' sake," though it be but in a lower degree, the Spirit of God and of glory shall in some good measure rest upon you. And you cannot but feel such a satisfaction in your own minds, as you would not part with for all the world. Be never weary of well doing; never look back, for you know the prize and the crown are before you; though I can scarce think so meanly of you, as that you should be discouraged with the "crackling of thorns under a pot." Be not high-minded, but fear. Preserve an equal temper of mind under whatever treatment you meet with, from a not very just or well-natured world. Bear no more sail than is necessary, but steer steady. The less you value yourselves for these unfashionable duties, (as there is no such thing as works of supererogation,) the more all good and wise men will value you, if they see your works are all of a piece; or, which is infinitely more, He by whom actions and intentions are weighed will both accept, esteem, and reward you.

"I hear my son John has the honor of being styled the 'Father of the Holy Club;' if it be so, I am sure I must be the grandfather of it; and I need not say, that I had rather any of my sons should be so dignified and distinguished, than to have the title of His Holiness."†

Thus encouraged, they proceeded in their course with meekness and constancy; to relieve the poor, they sacrificed all the superfluities, and sometimes the conveniences of life; and they redoubled their efforts to produce religious impressions upon their college acquaintance, as well as upon the ignorant, the poor, and the sick. The apology for these pious and praiseworthy efforts, which, on the increase of the outcry made against them, Mr. Wesley published in the modest form of queries, amply indicates the low state of religious feeling in the university; and we may well conclude with one of Mr. Wesley's biographers, that "a voluntary scheme of so much private and public good, such piety, with such beneficence, certainly merited a different return; and, if the university, in general, instead of ridiculing or persecuting them, had had the grace to imitate their example, it would have been much better both for the public and themselves."

Even their eldest brother Samuel added his seasonable exhortations to perseverance, in a short, but vigorous letter:—"I cannot say, I thought you always, in every thing right; but I must now say, rather than you and Charles should give over your whole course, especially what relates to the castle, I would choose to follow either of you, nay both of you, to your graves. I cannot advise you better, than in the words I proposed for a motto to a pamphlet, Στηθ' ἑδραῖος ὡς ἄκμων τυπτόμενος· καλὸν γὰρ ἀθλητὴν δέρεσθαι καὶ νικᾶν. 'Stand thou steadfast as a beaten anvil; for it is the part of a good champion to be flayed alive and to conquer.'"‡

Sickness, and cowardly desertion arising from weariness of the cross, some time after this, reduced the number of this little society of zealous young men, and the brothers were left to stand almost alone; but they still persevered with unabated zeal

* 2 Cor. vii. 4. Great is my glorying of you. I am filled with comfort. I am exceedingly joyful.—*Authorised version.*

† Whitehead's Life.

‡ Whitehead's Life.

and diligence in their attempts to do good, exhibiting a rare example of decision, only to be accounted for by a preparing influence of God upon their hearts, thus training them up for a still more arduous service. This it was which had implanted in them those admirable principles which are unreservedly laid open in a letter of Mr. John Wesley to his brother Samuel, who had begun to think that they were pushing the strictness of their personal piety too far.

"1. As to the end of my being, I lay it down for a rule, that I cannot be too happy, or therefore too holy; and thence infer that the more steadily I keep my eye upon the prize of our high calling, and the more of my thoughts and words and actions are directly pointed at the attainment of it, the better. 2. As to the instituted means of attaining it, I likewise lay it down for a rule, that I am to use them every time I may. 3. As to prudential means, I believe this rule holds of things indifferent in themselves; whatever I know to do me hurt, that to me is not indifferent, but resolutely to be abstained from: whatever I know to do me good, that to me is not indifferent, but resolutely to be embraced." *

Adverting to this charge of over strictness, and being "righteous overmuch," he also earnestly requests his mother to point out any instance in which she might judge, from their unreserved communications to her of every part of their conduct, that they were too superstitious or enthusiastic on the one hand, or too remiss on the other. Some anxiety had indeed been created at home by the singularity of their proceedings, and the opposition they had roused at Oxford, which was probably the chief reason why the father extended his journey from London to Oxford at the close of the year 1731. He was, however, evidently satisfied with his personal observations and inquiries; for on his return to London, he writes to Mrs. Wesley, that he had been well repaid for the expense and labor of his journey to Oxford, "by the shining piety of our two sons."

In the midst of all this zeal, devotedness, and patience of reproach, when the eye of man could see nothing but a mature and vital Christianity, we are enabled to ascertain the state of Mr. Wesley's own heart, as laid open by himself. Speaking of a time a little subsequent to the decided impressions he had received from the reading of Bishop Taylor's "Holy Living and Dying," and Mr. Law's "Serious Call," he says, "I was convinced more than ever, of the exceeding height and breadth and depth of the law of God. The light flowed in so mightily upon my soul, that every thing appeared in a new view. I cried to God for help, and resolved not to prolong the time of obeying him as I had never done before. And by my continued endeavor to keep his whole law, inward and outward to the best of my power, I was persuaded that I should be accepted of him; and that I was even then in a state of salvation."

He was now manifestly seeking justification before God by efforts at a perfect obedience to his law; nor was he then quite hopeless as to success. Some time afterward, still clearly convinced as he had been from the first that he was not in that state of mind, that settled enjoyment of conscious peace with God, that love to him, delight in him, and filial access to him, which the New Testament describes as the privilege of a true believer, but still diligently persevering in the rigid practice of every discovered duty in the hope of seizing the great prize by this means, he became greatly surprised that he was so far from obtaining it. He was often dull and formal in the use of ordinances, and was on that account thrown "into distress and perplexity; so that he seemed at a loss which way to proceed, to obtain the happiness and security he wanted." * The deep tone of feeling, and the earnestness of his inquiries, in the following passages from a letter to his mother, written in 1732, present this state of his mind in a very affecting light. He then needed some one more fully instructed in the true doctrine of salvation, than even this excellent and intelligent "guide of his youth," to teach him to lay down the burden of his wounded and anxious spirit, in self-despair as to his own efforts, at the foot of the cross of Christ.

After mentioning Mr. Morgan, he observes: "One consideration is enough to make me assent to his and your judgment concerning the holy sacrament; which is, that we cannot allow Christ's human nature to be present in it, without allowing either con- or tran-substantiation. But that his divinity is so united to us then, as he never is but to worthy receivers, I firmly believe; though the manner of that union is utterly a mystery to me.

"That none but worthy receivers should find this effect is not strange to me, when I observe, how small effect many means of improvement have upon an unprepared mind. Mr. Morgan and my brother were affected, as they ought, by the observations you made on that glorious subject: but though my understanding approved what was excellent, yet my heart did not feel it. Why was this, but because it was pre-engaged by those affections with which wisdom will not dwell? Because the animal mind cannot relish those truths which are spiritually discerned. Yet I have those writings which the good Spirit gave to that end! I have many of those which he hath since assisted his servants to give us; I have retirement to apply these to my own soul daily; I have means both of public and private prayer; and above all, of partaking in that sacrament once a week. What shall I do to make all these blessings effectual? to gain from them that mind which was also in Christ Jesus?

"To all who give signs of their not being strangers to it, I propose this question—and why not to you rather than any?—Shall I quite break off my pursuit of all learning, but what immediately tends to practice? I once desired to make a fair show in languages and philosophy; but it is past; there is a more excellent way; and if I cannot attain to any progress in the one, without throwing up all thoughts of the other, why fare it well! yet a little while, and we shall all be equal in knowledge, if we are in virtue.

"You say, you have renounced the world. And what have I been doing all this time? What have I done ever since I was born? Why I have been plunging myself into it more and more. It is enough: awake thou that sleepest. Is there not one Lord, one Spirit, one hope of our calling? one way of attaining that hope? Then I am to renounce the world as well as you. That is the very thing I want to do: to draw off my affections from this world, and fix them on a better. But how? What is the surest and the shortest way? Is it not to be humble? Surely this is a large step in the way. But the question recurs, How am I to do this? To own the necessity of it, is not to be humble. In many things you have interceded for me and prevailed. Who knows but in this, too, you may be successful? If you can spare me only that little part of Thursday evening which you formerly bestowed upon me in another manner, I doubt not but it would be as useful now, for correcting my heart, as it was then for forming my judgment.

"When I observe how fast life flies away, and how slow improvement comes, I think one can ne-

* Whitehead's Life.

* Whitehead.

ver be too much afraid of dying before one has learned to live. I mean even in the course of nature. For were I sure that 'the silver cord should not be violently loosed;' that 'the wheel' should not be 'broken at the cistern,' till it was quite worn away by its own motion; yet what a time would this give me for such a work! a moment, to transact the business of eternity! What are forty years in comparison of this? So that were I sure what never man yet was sure of, how little would it alter the case? How justly still might I cry out,

'Downward I hasten to my destined place;
There none obtain thy aid, none sing thy praise!
Soon shall I lie in death's deep ocean drowned;
Is mercy there, is sweet forgiveness found?
O save me yet, while on the brink I stand;
Rebuke these storms, and set me safe on land.
O make my longings and thy mercy sure!
Thou art the God of power.'" *

It was not, therefore, as it has been hastily stated, that he first learned from the Moravians that he was not a true Christian. He had, at Oxford, a most painful conviction that he was far below the evangelical standard. He had then, as this letter sufficiently shows, a large measure of the "spirit of bondage unto fear;" and that after which his perplexed heart panted, was the "Spirit of adoption," by which he might "cry, Abba, Father."

During the summer of this year, 1732, Mr. Wesley visited London, where he formed an acquaintance with several respectable and pious persons. He also made two journeys to Epworth. The latter of these was in order to meet the whole family, which had assembled, upon his father's request, once more before their final separation by death. These and other journeys he performed on foot, partly no doubt, to avoid what he considered needless expense, that he might, according to his rule, have the more to distribute in charity; and partly to accustom himself to fatigue and hardship. "In these excursions, he constantly preached on the Lord's day; so that he might now be called, in some degree, an itinerant preacher." In the following year, he again visited Epworth, Manchester, and some other places; but his occasional absence had a bad effect upon the still persecuted society at Oxford, whose members shrunk from the storm, and took the opportunity of his being away to shake off the strictness of the rules. The five-and-twenty communicants at St. Mary's, he informs his father, had shrunk to five. Still his courage was unshaken, and he exerted himself the more, upon his return, to repair the loss. Towards the end of the year, his exertions of mind and body, with an excess of abstemiousness, greatly affected his health, and induced spitting of blood. His state was such as greatly to alarm his friends; but the vigor of his constitution triumphed; and this attack of disease served to impress him the more deeply with eternal things, and to give renewed ardor to his endeavors after universal holiness, and to his plans for the religious benefit of his fellow-creatures.

A considerable trial to his feelings now awaited him. The declining age of his father, who anxiously desired to provide for the special wants of his parishioners in a suitable manner, joined with the wishes of the people of Epworth, and the concerns of the family for which no provision, it seems, had been made, induced him to write to his son, to make interest for the next presentation to the living. Mr. Wesley, from his reluctance to leave Oxford, where he thought he should be far more useful, and where, according to his own convictions, he was placed in circumstances more conducive to his spiritual improvement, refused the proposal; and the most urgent letters of the different branches of the family were insufficient to bend his resolution. His father wrote him a pathetic letter, in which every consideration was urged which might answer his objections, or move his feelings. His brother Samuel addressed him in a sterner mood, urging that he was not at liberty to resolve against undertaking a cure of souls, to which he was solemnly pledged by his ordination; and ridiculed his notion that he could not, so safely to himself, or so usefully to others, take the charge of a parish priest, as remain at Oxford. To all this he reiterates, that his own holiness and usefulness could be promoted nowhere so effectually as in his present station; that his retirement, his friends, and other advantages were essential to his improvement; that he was inadequate to the charge of two thousand parishioners; and that he did not consider his ordination vows in the same light as his brother. On the last point, indeed, he was supported by the opinion of the bishop who ordained him, and whom he consulted on the question. These and other topics run through the correspondence, which, though it is not necessary to give entire, affords considerable insight into the state of Mr. Wesley's mind. His conduct in this matter has been criticised as unfeeling, without considering that the kindness of his general character is a sufficient pledge, that the refusal of the urgent request of a venerable father, and a beloved mother whose widowhood would be unprovided for, must have been to him sufficiently painful. Dr. Southey thinks the correspondence not "creditable to his judgment;" * but it would be hard to prove that the leading consideration which influenced him, that he was more usefully employed in doing good at the very "fountain" from which the nation was to be so largely supplied with its clergy, than as a country parish priest, was not a very obvious truth. This conclusion, true or false, was at least a very plausible one, and as such concerned his conscience; and his disregard of his own temporal advantage, which certainly lay on the side of the Epworth rectory, and his merging all consideration of the interests of the family in the higher question of what he regarded as a duty, might not appear instances of "good judgment" to worldly minds, and yet be so in reality. His leading reason, drawn from his greater usefulness at Oxford, being strong in itself, that he, with his wonted decision of character, should stand firmly upon it, will create no surprise; but that some of his other reasons are less weighty may be granted. They show that he had more confidence in a certain class of means, to secure his religious safety than in the grace of God. This was the natural effect of those notions of the efficacy of retirement, and self-denial, and "the wisdom of flight" from danger, which he had learned from Bishop Taylor; whilst the views he entertained of the necessity of exercising a minute personal superintendence over every individual committed to his charge, as being equally necessary to his own good conscience, and to their salvation, led him to regard a parish, containing two thousand souls, as too formidable and fearful an undertaking. His *religious* judgment was indeed as yet immature and perplexed; but in reasoning from his own principles, his *natural* judgment showed its usual strength in the conclusions to which it conducted him. Whatever weakness there might be in the case was the result of the imperfect state of his religious experience, and of that dependence upon his own plans of attaining spirituality, to which it gave rise; but connecting him with that great work which he was designed afterwards to effect, we must shut out also the doctrine of providence, if we do not see a higher

* Whitehead's Life.

* Life of Wesley.

hand than that of man in this determination; a hand which is not the less certainly employed, when it works its ends through the secret volitions, aversions, inclinations, and even prejudices of the human heart, than when it more sensibly and immediately interposes to hasten or retard our purposes. Mr. Wesley's father died in April, 1735. He had been manifestly ripening for his change; and in his last moments had the consolation of the presence of his two sons, John and Charles. "He had no fear of death; and the peace of God which he enjoyed appeared sometimes to suspend his bodily sufferings, and, when they recurred, to sustain his mind above them. When, as nature seemed spent, and his speech was failing, his son John asked him whether he was not near heaven, he answered, 'Yes, I am,' distinctly, and with a voice of hope and joy. After John had used the commendatory prayer, he said, 'Now you have done all;' these were his last words, and he passed away so peacefully and insensibly, that his children continued over him a considerable time in doubt whether or not the spirit was departed. Mrs. Wesley, who for several days, whenever she entered his chamber, had been carried out of it in a fit, recovered her fortitude now, and said her prayers were heard, for God had granted him an easy death, and had strenghtened her to bear it."* Brighter views of the doctrine of faith had opened upon his mind, during his sickness, and shed their influence upon his last hours. This his sons afterwards more clearly understood than at the time.†

About the middle of this year, the trustees of the new colony of Georgia, who wished to send out clergymen both to administer to the spiritual wants of the colonists, and also to attempt the conversion of the Indians, directed their attention to Mr. John Wesley, and some of his friends at Oxford, as peculiarly qualified, both by zeal and piety, and their habits of self-denial, for this service. After some delay, and consultation with his family, he accepted the offer; and thus, though Epworth could not draw him from Oxford, an enterprise of a missionary character, and presenting no temptations to ease and sloth, such as he feared in a parish at home, overcame his scruples. This itself is in proof that he had not resolved to remain in Oxford, in preference to accepting the living of Epworth, from selfish motives. In the question of usefulness, the balance before inclined to Oxford; and now that he thought a greater field for doing good opened in America, he yielded to that consideration. This mission was accompanied also with the certainty of great hardships and sufferings, which, according to his then defective, but most sincere views, were necessary to his perfection. His residence at Oxford now terminated, and this portion of his life may be properly concluded by some passages of a letter written by Mr. Gambold, a man of fine genius, as some of his poems show, and of eminent holiness; who, some years afterwards, left the church of England, and became a Moravian bishop. The letter was addressed to one of Mr. Wesley's relations, and contains a lively description of the character and proceedings of a friend whom he did not then expect to see again on earth:

"About the middle of March, 1730, I became acquainted with Mr. Charles Wesley, of Christ Church. After some time he introduced me to his brother John, of Lincoln college. 'For he is somewhat older,' said he, 'than I am, and can resolve your doubts better.' I never observed any person have a more real deference for another than he had for his brother; which is the more remarkable, because such near relations, being equals by birth, and conscious to each other of all the little familiar passages of their lives, commonly stand too close to see the ground there may be for such submission. Indeed he followed his brother entirely; could I describe one of them, I should describe both. I shall therefore say no more of Charles, but that he was a man formed for friendship, who, by his cheerfulness and vivacity, would refresh his friend's heart; with attentive consideration, would enter into, and settle all his concerns as far as he was able; he would do any thing for him, great or small; and, by a habit of mutual openness and freedom would leave no room for misunderstanding.

"The Wesleys were already talked of for some religious practices, which were first occasioned by Mr. Morgan, of Christ Church. From these combined friends began a little society. Mr. John Wesley was the chief manager, for which he was very fit; for he had not only more learning and experience than the rest, but he was blessed with such activity as to be always gaining ground, and such steadiness that he lost none. What proposals he made to any were sure to alarm them, because he was so much in earnest; nor could they afterwards slight them, because they saw him always the same. What supported this uniform vigor was the care he took to consider well every affair before he engaged in it, making all his decisions in the fear of God, without passion, humor, or self-confidence. For though he had naturally a very clear apprehension, yet his exact prudence depended more on his humility and singleness of heart. He had, I think, something of authority in his countenance, yet he never assumed any thing to himself above his companions; any of them might speak their mind, and their words were as strictly regarded by him as his words were by them.

"Their undertaking included these several particulars: to converse with young students; to visit the prisons; to instruct some poor families; to take care of a school, and a parish workhouse. They took great pains with the younger members of the university, to rescue them from bad company, and encourage them in a sober, studious life. They would get them to breakfast, and over a dish of tea endeavor to fasten some good hint upon them. They would bring them acquainted with other well-disposed young men, give them assistance in the difficult parts of their learning, and watch over them with the greatest tenderness.

"Some or other of them went to the Castle every day, and another most commonly to Bocardo. Whoever went to the Castle was to read in the chapel to as many prisoners as would attend, and to talk apart to the man or men whom he had taken particularly in charge. When a new prisoner come, their conversation with him for four or five times was close and searching. If any one was under sentence of death, or appeared to have some inten-

* Southey's Life.

† In some of the biographical notices which have been published of this venerable man, he is represented as of a harsh and stern character. On this point the late Miss Wesley observes, in a MS. letter before me, "I never understood this from any of his children, who idolized his memory, and spoke of his kindness. He certainly never forced his daughter to marry Wright, as it has been suggested." In the same letter, Miss Wesley also corrects the current anecdote respecting the Epworth clerk and the rector's wig, which, though laughable enough, implicates Mr. Wesley in an irreverent act, in the house of God, of which he was not capable. The clerk did appear one Sunday, in church, in the ill-befitting, cast-off wig of his master; and, to the disturbance of the gravity of the congregation, gave out the psalm,

"Like to an owl in ivy bush,
That fearsome thing am I."

But Mr. Wesley had no hand in selecting the psalm, which appears to have been purely accidental.

tions of a new life, they came every day to his assistance, and partook in the conflict and suspense of those who should now be found able, or not able, to lay hold on salvation. In order to release those who were confined for small debts, and to purchase books and other necessaries, they raised a little fund, to which many of their acquaintance contributed quarterly. They had prayers at the Castle most Wednesdays and Fridays, a sermon on Sunday, and the sacrament once a month.

"When they undertook any poor family, they saw them at least once a-week; sometimes gave them money, admonished them of their vices, read to them and examined their children. The school was, I think, of Mr. Wesley's own setting up; however, he paid the mistress, and clothed some, if not all the children. When they went thither, they inquired how each child behaved, saw their work, heard them read and say their prayers, or catechism, and explained part of it. In the same manner they taught the children in the workhouse, and read to the old people as they did to the prisoners.

"They seldom took any notice of the accusations brought against them for their charitable employments; but if they did make any reply, it was commonly such a plain and simple one, as if there was nothing more in the case, but that they had just heard such doctrines of their Saviour, and had believed, and done accordingly.

"I could say a great deal of his private piety, how it was nourished by a continual recourse to God, and preserved by a strict watchfulness in beating down pride, and reducing the craftiness and impetuosity of nature to a childlike simplicity, and a good degree crowned with divine love, and victory over the whole set of earthly passions. He thought prayer to be more his business than any thing else; and I have seen him come out of his closet with a serenity of countenance that was next to shining; it discovered what he had been doing, and gave me double hope of receiving wise directions, in the matter about which I came to consult him. In all his motions he attended to the will of God. He had neither the presumption nor the leisure to anticipate things whose season was not now; and would show some uneasiness whenever any of us, by impertinent speculations, were shifting off the appointed improvement of the present minute.

"Because he required such a regulation of our studies as might devote them all to God, he has been accused as one that discouraged learning. Far from that; for the first thing he struck at, in young men, was that indolence which will not submit to close thinking. He earnestly recommended to them a method and order in all their actions.

"If any one could have provoked him, I should; for I was very slow in coming into their measures, and very remiss in doing my part. I frequently contradicted his assertions; or, which is much the same, distinguished upon them. I hardly ever submitted to his advice at the time he gave it, though I relented afterwards. He is now gone to Georgia as a missionary, where there is ignorance that aspires after divine wisdom, but no false learning that is got above it. He is, I confess, still living; and I know that an advantageous character is more decently bestowed on the deceased. But, besides that his condition is very like that of the dead, being unconcerned in all we say, I am not making any attempt on the opinion of the public, but only studying a private edification. A family picture of him his relations may be allowed to keep by them. And this is the idea of Mr. Wesley, which I cherish for the service of my own soul, and which I take the liberty likewise to deposit with you."*

Whitehead's Life.

This letter is honorable to Mr. Gambold's friendship; but he was not himself, at that time, of mature spiritual discernment, nor had Mr. Wesley opened the state of his heart to him with the freedom which we have seen in his letters to his mother. The external picture of the man is exact; but he was not inwardly that perfect Christian which Mr. Gambold describes, nor had he that abiding "interior peace." He was struggling with inward corruptions, which made him still cry, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" And he as yet put mortification, retirement, and contempt of the world, too much in the place of that divine atonement, the virtue of which, when received by simple faith, at once removes the sense of guilt, cheers the spirit by a peaceful sense of acceptance through the merits of Christ, and renews the whole heart after the image of God. He was indeed attempting to work out "his own salvation with fear and trembling;" but not as knowing that "it is God that worketh in us to will and to do of his good pleasure." He had not, in this respect, learned "to be nothing," that he might "possess all things."

CHAPTER III.

Mr. Wesley now prepared for Georgia, the place where, as he afterwards said, "God humbled me, and proved me, and showed me what was in my heart." But he was not suffered to depart without remonstrances from friends, which he answered calmly and at length, and the scoffs of the profane, to which he made but brief reply. "What is this, Sir?" said one of the latter class to him; "are you turned Quixote, too? Will nothing serve you, but to encounter windmills?" To which he replied, "Sir, if the Bible be not true, I am as very a fool and madman as you can conceive; but if it be of God, I am sober-minded."

Mr. Charles Wesley, although in opposition to the opinion of his brother Samuel, agreed to accompany him to Georgia, and received holy orders. They were accompanied by Mr. Ingham, of Queen's college, and Mr. Delamotte. That Mr. Wesley considered the sacrifices and hardships of their mission in the light of means of religious edification to themselves, as well as the means of doing good to others, is plain from his own account: "Our end in leaving our native country was not to avoid want; God had given us plenty of temporal blessings; nor to gain the dung and dross of riches and honor; but singly this, to save our souls, to live wholly to the glory of God." These observations are sufficiently indicative of that dependance upon a mortified course of life, and that seclusion from the temptations of the world, which he then thought essential to religious safety.

Georgia is now a flourishing state, and the number of Methodist societies in it very considerable: a result not then certainly contemplated by the Wesleys, who labored there with little success, and quitted it almost in despair. The first settlers from England embarked in 1732, with Mr. James Oglethorpe at their head, who was also one of the trustees under the charter. This gentleman founded Savannah, and concluded a treaty with the Creek Indians. Wars with both Spaniards and Indians, however, subsequently arose, as well as domestic feuds; and in 1752 the trustees surrendered their charter to the king, and it was made a royal government. It was, therefore, in the infancy of the colony that the Wesleys commenced their labors.

That they should experience trouble, vexation, and disappointment, was the natural result both of the circumstances in which they were placed, and their own religious habits and views. A small colony, and especially in its infancy, is usually a focus

of faction, discontent, and censoriousness. The colonists are often disappointed, uneasy in their circumstances, frustrated in their hopes, and impatient of authority. This was the case in Georgia: and although Mr. Oglethorpe upon the whole was a worthy governor, he was subject to prejudices, and prone to be misled by designing men. He certainly did not support the Wesleys with that steadiness and uniformity which were due to them;* and on the other hand they were not faultless, although their intentions were entirely upright. They had high notions of clerical authority; and their pastoral faithfulness was probably rigid and repulsive; for in spite of the excellence of their own natural temper, an austere cast had been given to their piety. They stood firmly on little things, as well as great; and held the reins of ecclesiastical discipline with a tightness unsuitable to infant colonists especially, and which tended to provoke resistance. Their integrity of heart, and the purity of their intentions, came forth without a stain: they must also be allowed to have proceeded according to the best light they had; but they knew not yet "the love of Christ," nor how to sway men's hearts by that all-commanding and controlling motive; and they aimed at making men Christians, in the manner they sought that great attainment themselves—by a rigid and ascetic discipline.

On their passage, an exact plan for the employment of time was arranged, and observed; but the voyage is most remarkable for bringing Mr. Wesley acquainted with the members of the Moravian church; for, among the settlers taken out, were twenty-six Germans of this communion. Mr. Wesley immediately began to learn German, in order to converse with them; and David Nitchman, the Moravian bishop, and two others, received lessons in English. On the passage they had several storms, in which Mr. Wesley felt that the fear of death had not been taken away from him, and concluded therefore that he was not fit to die; on the contrary, he greatly admired the absence of all slavish dread in the Germans. He says, "I had long before observed the great seriousness of their behavior. Of their humility they had given a continual proof, by performing those servile offices for the other passengers which none of the English would undertake; for which they desired and would receive no pay; saying, it was 'good for their proud hearts, and their loving Saviour had done more for them.' And every day had given them occasion of showing a meekness, which no injury could move. If they were pushed, struck, or thrown down, they rose again and went away; but no complaint was found in their mouth. There was now an opportunity of trying whether they were delivered from the spirit of fear, as well as from that of pride, anger, and revenge. In the midst of the psalm wherewith their service began, the sea broke over, split the main-sail in pieces, covered the ship, and poured in between the decks, as if the great deep had already swallowed us up. A terrible screaming began among the English. The Germans calmly sung on. I asked one of them afterwards, 'Was you not afraid?' He answered, 'I thank God, No.' I asked, 'But were not your women and children afraid?' He replied mildly, 'No; our women and children are not afraid to die.'"†

Thus he had the first glimpse of a religious experience which keeps the mind at peace in all circumstances, and vanquishes that feeling which a formal and defective religion may lull to temporary sleep, but cannot eradicate—"the fear of death."

They landed on the 6th of February, 1736, on a small uninhabited island; from whence Mr. Oglethorpe proceeded to Savannah, and returned the next day, bringing with him Mr. Spangenberg, one of the Moravian pastors, already settled there.

"I soon found," says Mr. Wesley, "what spirit he was of; and asked his advice with regard to my own conduct. He said, 'My brother, I must first ask you one or two questions. Have you the witness within yourself? Does the Spirit of God bear witness with your spirit, that you are the child of God?' I was surprised, and knew not what to answer. He observed it, and asked, 'Do you know Jesus Christ?' I paused and said, I know he is the Saviour of the world. 'True,' replied he; 'but do you know he has saved you?' I answered, I hope he has died to save me. He only added, 'Do you know yourself?' I said I do. But I fear they were vain words."*

Mr. Charles Wesley took charge of Frederica, and Mr. John, of Savannah, where, the house not being ready, he took up his residence with the Germans, with whose spirit and conduct he became still more favorably impressed, and whose mode of proceeding in the election and ordination of a bishop carried him back, he says, to those primitive times "where form and state were not; but Paul the tent-maker, and Peter the fisherman, presided; yet with demonstration of the Spirit, and power."

Mr. Wesley had not been long at Savannah before he heard from Charles of his troubles and opposition at Frederica. His presence among the licentious colonists, and the frequent reproofs he administered, made him an object of great hatred, and "plots were formed either to ruin him in the opinion of Oglethorpe, or to take him off by violence."† Oglethorpe was for a time successfully practiced upon, treated him with coldness, and left him to endure the greatest privations. He lay upon the ground in the corner of a hut, and was denied the luxury of a few boards for a bed. He was out of favor with the governor; even the servants on that account insulted him; and, worn out with vexation and hardships, he fell into a dangerous fever. In this state he was visited by his brother John, who prevailed upon him to break a resolution which "honor and indignation" had induced him to form, of "starving rather than ask for necessaries." Soon after this Mr. Oglethorpe discovered the plots of which he had been the victim, and was fully reconciled to him. He then took charge of Savannah, whilst John supplied his place at Frederica; and in July, 1736, he was sent to England, charged with despatches from Mr. Oglethorpe to the trustees and the board of trade, and in December, arrived at Deal; thus terminating a service in which he had preached with great fidelity and zeal; but had met with very unworthy returns.

Of the two places, Savannah appears to have been more hopeful than Frederica; and as Mr. John Wesley did not find the door open for preaching to the Indians, he consulted with his companions, in what manner they might be most useful to the flock at Savannah. It was agreed, 1. To advise the more serious among them, to form themselves into a little society, and to meet once or twice a-week, in order to reprove, instruct, and exhort one another. 2. To select out of these a smaller number for a more intimate union with each other; which might be forwarded partly by their conversing singly with each, and inviting them all to Mr. Wesley's house: and this accordingly they deter-

* Oglethorpe's good opinion of the brothers was, however, shown by his anxiety to persuade Charles to return again to the colony, after he had visited England; and by the marked respect and even reverence with which at a future period he treated John.

† Journal.

* Journal.

† Whitehead's Life.

mined to do every Sunday in the afternoon. "Here," says Dr. Whitehead, "we see the first rudiments of the future economy of classes and bands." *

In this respect he probably learned something from the Moravians, and the whole plan fell in with his previous views of discipline and method. The character of his mind was eminently practical; he was in earnest, and he valued things just as they appeared to be adapted to promote the edification and salvation of those committed to his charge. A school was also established; and the children regularly catechised by Mr. Wesley, both in private and in the church. Evening meetings for the more serious were also held at his house: so actively did he apply himself not only to the public services of the sanctuary, but to every kind of engagement by which he might make "full proof of his ministry." The religious state of his own mind, however, remained much the same. He saw another striking instance of the power of faith, in the peaceful and edifying death of one of the Moravians; and had another proof that he himself was not saved from "the fear which hath torment," in a severe storm of thunder and lightning. Both indicated to him that he had not attained the state of "the sons of God;" but his views were still perplexed and obscure. From a conversation which he had with some Indians who had visited Savannah, he concluded that the way was opened for him to preach among the Choctaws, and this he was desirous of attempting; but as Savannah would have been left without a minister, the governor objected; and his friends were also of opinion, that he could not then be spared from the colony.

In his visits to Frederica he met with great opposition and much illiberal abuse; in Savannah he was, however, rapidly gaining influence, when a circumstance occurred which issued in his departure from Georgia altogether. He had formed an attachment to an accomplished young lady, a Miss Hopkey,† niece to the wife of Mr. Causton, the chief magistrate of Savannah, which she appears to have returned, or at least encouraged. The biographers of Mr. Wesley, Dr. Whitehead and Mr. Moore, differ as to the fact, whether this connection was broken off by him, or by the lady herself in consequence of his delays. The latter professes to have received the whole account from Mr. Wesley, and must therefore be presumed to be the best authority. From his statement it appears that Mr. Delamotte suspected the sincerity of the lady's pretensions to piety, and thought his friend Mr. Wesley, whose confiding and unsuspecting heart prevented him at all times from being a severe judge of others, was likely to be the victim of artifices which he had not the skill or the inclination to discern. His remonstrances led Mr. Wesley to refer the question of his marriage with Miss Hopkey to the judgment of the elders of the Moravian church, which he thought he was at liberty to do, since the acquaintance, though it had ripened into regard and thoughts of marriage, had not, it seems, proceeded to any thing determinate. The Moravians advised him to proceed no further; and his conduct towards Miss Hopkey became cautious and distant, very naturally to her mortification, and perhaps pain. An entry in his journal shows that he had a considerable struggle with his own feelings, and that his sense of duty had exacted a great sacrifice from his heart. The lady soon afterwards married a Mr. Williamson; but a hostile feeling towards him had been left in the minds of her friends, which the gossiping and censorious habits of a small colony would not fail to keep alive. Though Mr. Wesley did not certainly see her married to another with perfect philosophy, it was not in his generous nature to allow his former affection to turn into resentment, which was the fault subsequently charged upon him; and as he soon saw many things in her to reprove, it is probable that he thought his escape a fortunate one. Perhaps, considering the singularity of his habits at that time, it was well for the lady also; which seems, indeed, jocosely intimated in a passage of a letter of his brother Samuel to him on the occasion—"I am sorry you are disappointed in one match, because you are unlikely to find another."

An opportunity for the manifestation of the secret prejudice which had been nourished by the friends of the niece of Mrs. Causton was afforded in about five months after her marriage. Mr. Wesley adhered to the rubric of the church of England as to the administration of the sacrament, without respect to persons, and with a rigidness which was not at all common. He repelled those whom he thought unworthy; and when any one had neglected the ordinance, he required him to signify his name the day before he intended to communicate again. Sometime after Mrs. Williamson's marriage, he discovered several things which he thought blameable in her conduct. These, as she continued to communicate, he mentioned to her, and she in return became angry. For reasons therefore, which he stated to her in a letter, he repelled her from the communion. This letter was written by desire of Mr. Causton, who wished to have his reasons for repelling his niece, in writing:

"At Mr. Causton's request I write once more. The rules whereby I proceed are these: 'So many as intend to partake of the holy communion shall signify their names to the curate, at least some time the day before.' This you did not do.

"'And if any of these—have done any wrong to his neighbor by word or deed, so that the congregation be thereby offended, the curate shall advertise him, that in anywise he presume not to come to the Lord's table, until he hath openly declared himself to have truly repented.'

"If you offer yourself at the Lord's table on Sunday, I will advertise you, as I have done more than once, wherein you have done wrong: and when you have openly declared yourself to have truly repented, I will administer to you the mysteries of God."*

The storm now broke forth upon him. A warrant was issued, and he was brought before the recorder and magistrates, on the charge of Mr. Williamson, 1. That he had defamed his wife. 2. That he had causelessly repelled her from the holy communion. Mr. Wesley denied the first charge; and the second being wholly ecclesiastical, he would not acknowledge the authority of the magistrate to decide upon it. He was however told that he must appear before the next court, holden at Savannah.

The Causton family became now most active in their efforts to injure him. By them, the reason why Mr. Wesley had repelled Mrs. Williamson from the Lord's table was stated to be his resentment against her for having refused to marry him; which they knew to be contrary to the fact. Garbled extracts of his letters were read by Causton to

* There was however nothing new in this. Mr. Wesley had doubtless heard, in his visits to London, of the religious societies described by Dr. Woodward, which were encouraged by the more serious clergy, and held weekly private meetings for religious edification. It is probable that he had even attended such meetings in the metropolis. Wherever indeed a revival of serious religion has taken place, and ministers have been in earnest to promote it, we see similar means adopted, as by Baxter at Kidderminster, during his eminently successful ministry there.

† Incorrectly called Miss Causton by Mr. Wesley's biographers.

* Journal.

those whom he could collect to hear them, probably in order to confirm this; and Mrs. Williamson was prevailed upon to swear to and sign a paper containing assertions and insinuations injurious to his character.* *

The calm courage of the man who was thus so violently and unjustly persecuted, was not, however, to be shaken. "I sat still at home," says Mr. Wesley, "and I thank God, easy, having committed my cause to him, and remembered his word, 'Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.'"†

As the sitting of the court drew near, Causton used every art to influence the grand jury; and when they met, gave them "a long and earnest charge, 'to beware of spiritual tyranny, and to oppose the new illegal authority which was usurped over their consciences.' Mrs. Williamson's affidavit was read; and he then delivered to them a paper, entitled, a List of Grievances, presented by the grand jury for Savannah, this —— day of August, 1737. In the afternoon Mrs. Williamson was examined, who acknowledged that she had no objections to make against Mr. Wesley's conduct before her marriage. The next day Mr. and Mrs. Causton were also examined, when she confessed, that it was by her request Mr. Wesley had written to Mrs. Williamson on the 5th of July; and Mr. Causton declared, that if Mr. Wesley had asked his consent to have married his niece, he should not have refused it. The grand jury continued to examine these ecclesiastical grievances, which occasioned warm debates till Thursday; when Mr. Causton being informed they had entered on matters beyond his instructions, went to them, and behaved in such a manner, that he turned forty-two, out of the forty-four, into a fixed resolution to inquire into his whole behavior. They immediately entered on that business and continued examining witnesses all day on Friday. On Saturday, Mr. Causton finding all his efforts to stop them ineffectual, adjourned the court till Thursday, the first of September, and spared no pains, in the mean time, to bring them to another mind. September I. He so far prevailed, that the majority of the grand jury returned the list of grievances to the court, in some particulars altered, under the form of two presentments, containing ten bills, only two of which related to the affair of Mrs. Williamson; and only one of these was cognizable by that court, the rest being merely ecclesiastical. September 2. Mr. Wesley addressed the court to this effect: 'As to nine of the ten indictments against me, I know this court can take no cognizance of them; they being matters of an ecclesiastical nature, and this not an ecclesiastical court. But the tenth, concerning my speaking and writing to Mrs. Williamson, is of a secular nature; and this, therefore, I desire may be tried here, where the facts complained of were committed.' Little answer was made, and that purely evasive.

"In the afternoon he moved the court again, for an immediate trial at Savannah; adding, 'that those who are offended may clearly see whether I have done any wrong to any one; or whether I have not rather deserved the thanks of Mrs. Williamson, Mr. Causton, and of the whole family.' Mr. Causton's answer was full of civility and respect. He observed, 'Perhaps things would not have been carried so far had you not said, you believed if Mr. Causton appeared, the people would tear him to pieces; not so much out of love to you, as out of hatred to him for his abominable practices.' If Mr. Wesley really spake these words, he was certainly very imprudent, considering the circumstances in which he was placed. But we too often find in disputes, that the constructions of others on what had been said, are reported as the very words we have spoken; which I suspect to have been the case here. Mr. Causton, however, sufficiently discovered the motives that influenced his conduct in this business.

"Twelve of the grand jurors now drew up a protest against the proceedings of the majority, to be immediately sent to the trustees in England. In this paper they gave such clear and satisfactory reasons, under every bill, for their dissent from the majority, as effectually did away all just ground of complaint against Mr. Wesley, on the subjects of the prosecution."*

"He attended the court holden on November the third; and again at the court held on the twenty-third; urging an immediate hearing of his case, that he might have an opportunity of answering the allegations alleged against him. But this the magistrates refused, and at the same time countenanced every report to his disadvantage; whether it was a mere invention, or founded on a malicious construction of any thing he did or said. Mr. Wesley perceiving that he had not the most distant prospect of obtaining justice; that he was in a place where those in power were combined together to oppress him; and could any day procure evidence (as experience had shown) of words he had never spoken, and of actions he had never done; being disappointed, too, in the primary object of his mission, preaching to the Indians; he consulted his friends what he ought to do; who were of opinion with him, that by these circumstances Providence did now call him to leave Savannah. The next day he called on Mr. Causton, and told him he designed to set out for England immediately."†

The magistrates made a show of forbidding him to leave the colony; but he embarked openly, after having publicly advertised his intention, no man interposing to prevent him; one leading object of these persecutions, being to drive him away. His sermons had been too faithful, and his reproofs too poignant, to make his continuance desirable to the majority of an irreligious colony.

The root of all this opposition no doubt lay in the enmity of his hearers to truth and holiness; but its manifestation might be occasioned in part by the strictness with which he acted upon obsolete branches of ecclesiastical discipline, and the unbending manner in which he insisted upon his spiritual authority. In the affair of Mrs. Williamson, he stands perfectly exculpated from the base motives which his enemies charged upon him; but in the first stages, it neither appears to have been managed with prudence, nor a proper degree of Christian courtesy. His enemies have sneered at his declaration, that, after he left Georgia, he discovered that he who went out to teach others Christianity, was not a Christian himself; but had he been a Christian in that full, evangelical sense which he meant; had he been that which he afterwards became, not only would the exclusion of Mrs. Williamson from the sacrament have been effected in another manner, but his mission to Georgia would probably have had a very different result. His preaching was defective in that one great point, which gives to preaching its real power over the heart, "Christ crucified;" and his spirit, although naturally frank and amiable, was not regenerated by that "power from on high," the first and leading fruits of which are meekness and charity.

In the midst of his trials, Mr. Wesley received very consolatory letters from his friends, both in England and in America; and there were many in

* Journal. † Ibid.

* Whitehead's Life. † Ibid.

Georgia itself, who rightly estimated the character and the labors of a man who held five or six public services on a Lord's day, in English, Italian, and French, for the benefit of a mixed population;—who spent his whole time in works of piety and mercy, and who distributed his income so profusely in charity, that for many months together, he had not "one shilling in the house." His health, whilst in America continued good; and it is in proof of the natural vigor of his constitution, that he exposed himself to every change of season, frequently slept on the ground, under the dews of the night in summer, and in winter with his hair and clothes frozen to the earth. He arrived in London, February 3d, 1738, and notwithstanding his many exercises, reviewed the result of his American labors with some satisfaction:—"Many reasons I have to bless God for my having been carried into that strange land contrary to all my preceding resolutions. Hereby I trust he hath in some measure 'humbled me, and proved me, and shown me what was in my heart.' Hereby I have been taught to 'beware of men.' Hereby God has given me to know many of his servants, particularly those of the church of Hernhuth. Hereby my passage is open to the writings of holy men, in the German, Spanish, and Italian tongues. All in Georgia have heard the word of God; some have believed, and began to run well. A few steps have been taken towards publishing the glad tidings both to the African and American heathens. Many children have learned 'how they ought to serve God,' and to be useful to their neighbor. And those whom it most concerns have an opportunity of knowing the state of their infant colony, and laying a firmer foundation of peace and happiness to many generations."

CHAPTER IV.

The solemn review which Mr. Wesley made of the state of his religious experience, both on his voyage home, and soon after his landing in England, deserves to be particularly noticed, both for general instruction, and because it stands in immediate connection with a point which has especially perplexed those who have attributed his charges against himself, as to the deficiency of his Christianity at this period, to a strange and fanatical fancy. By the most infallible of proofs, he tells us—that of his feelings—he was convinced of his having "no such faith in Christ" as prevented his heart from being troubled; and he earnestly prays to be "saved by such a faith as implies peace in life and death." "I went to America to convert the Indians; but O, who shall convert me! Who is he that will deliver me from this evil heart of unbelief? I have a fair summer religion; I can talk well, nay, and believe myself, while no danger is present; but let death look me in the face, and my spirit is troubled, nor can I say, 'To die is gain.'

'I have a sin of fear, that when I've spun
My last thread, I shall perish on the shore.'"

He thought, therefore, that a faith was attainable, which should deliver him entirely from guilty dread, and fill him with peace; but of this faith itself, his notions were still confused. He manifestly regarded it generally, as a principle of belief in the gospel, which, by quickening his efforts to self-mortification and entire obedience, would raise him, through a renewed state of heart, into acceptance and peace with God. This error is common. It regards faith, not so much as the personal trust of a guilty and helpless sinner upon Christ for salvation and all the gifts of spiritual life, but as working out sanctifying effects in the heart and life, partly by natural, partly by supernatural process, and thus producing peace of conscience.—But he goes on with this interesting history of his heart.

"I was early warned against laying too much stress on outward works, as the Papists do, or on a faith without works, which, as it does not *include*, so it will never lead to, true hope or charity."*

Here he manifestly confounds the faith by which a man is justified, which certainly does not "include" in itself the moral effects of which he speaks, with the faith of a man who is in a justified *state*, which necessarily produces them because of that vital union into which it brings him with Christ, his Saviour, by whom he is saved from the power and love, as well as from the guilt, of sin.

"I fell among some Lutheran and Calvinist authors, whose confused and indigested accounts magnified faith to such an amazing size, that it quite hid all the rest of the commandments."†

This is perhaps a proof that he did not understand these writers, any more than he did the Moravians in Georgia, who failed to enlighten him on the subject of faith, although he saw that they in fact possessed a "peace through believing," which he had not, and yet painfully felt to be necessary. The writers he mentions, probably represented faith only as necessary to justification; whilst he conceived them to teach, that faith only is necessary to final salvation.

"The English writers, such as bishop Beveridge, bishop Taylor, and Mr. Nelson, a little relieved me from these well-meaning, wrong-headed Germans. Their accounts of Christianity I could easily see to be, in the main, consistent both with reason and Scripture."‡

Beveridge would have met his case more fully than either Taylor or Nelson, had he been in a state of mind to comprehend him; and still better would he have been instructed by studying, with as much care as he examined Taylor and Law, the Homilies of his own church, and the works of her older divines.

The writings of the fathers then promised to give him further satisfaction; but to them he at length took various exceptions. He finally resorted to the Mystic writers, "whose noble descriptions of union with God, and internal religion, made every thing else appear mean, flat, and insipid. But in truth they made good works to appear so too, yea, and faith itself, and what not? These gave me an entire new view of religion, nothing like any I had before. But, alas! it was nothing like that religion which Christ and his apostles lived and taught. I had a plenary dispensation from all the commands of God; the form ran thus, 'Love is all; all the commands beside are only means of love; you must choose those which you feel are means to you, and use them as long as they are so.' Thus were all the bands burst at once. And though I could never fully come into this, nor contentedly omit what God enjoined, yet, I know not how, I fluctuated between obedience and disobedience. I had no heart, no vigor, no zeal in obeying, continually doubting whether I was right or wrong, and never out of perplexities and entanglements. Nor can I at this hour give a distinct account how or when I came a little back toward the right way; only my present sense is this:—all the other enemies of Christianity are triflers; the Mystics are the most dangerous of its enemies. They stab it in the vitals; and its most serious professors are most likely to fall by them. May I praise Him who hath snatched me out of this fire likewise, by warning all others that it is set on fire of hell."§

He was, however, delivered from the errors of the Mystics, only to be brought back to the point

* Journal. † Ibid. ‡ Ibid. § Ibid.

from which he set out; but his humble conclusion from the whole shows that the end of this long and painful struggle was about to be accomplished:—he was now brought fully to feel and confess his utter helplessness, and was not "far from the kingdom of God."

"And now," says he, "it is upwards of two years since I left my native country, in order to teach the Georgia Indians the nature of Christianity; but what have I learned myself in the mean time? Why, (what I least of all suspected,) that I who went to America, to convert others, was never converted myself. 'I am not mad,' though I thus speak; but 'speak the words of truth and soberness;' if haply some of those who still dream may awake, and see, that as I am, so are they.

"Are they read in philosophy? So was I. In ancient or modern tongues? So was I also. Are they versed in the science of divinity? I too have studied it many years. Can they talk fluently upon spiritual things? The very same I could do. Are they plenteous in alms? Behold, I give all my goods to feed the poor.

"Do they give of their labor as well as their substance? I have labored more abundantly than they all. Are they willing to suffer for their brethren? I have thrown up my friends, reputation, ease, country; I have put my life in my hand, wandering into strange lands; I have given my body to be devoured by the deep, parched up with heat, consumed by toil and weariness, or whatsoever God shall please to bring upon me. But does all this (be it more or less, it matters not) make me acceptable to God? Does all I ever did, or can know, say, give, do, or suffer, justify me in his sight? yea, or the constant use of all the means of grace? (which, nevertheless, is meet, right, and our bounden duty;) or that I know nothing of myself, that I am, as touching outward, moral righteousness, blameless? or, to come closer yet, the having a rational conviction of all the truths of Christianity? Does all this give a claim to the holy, heavenly, divine character of a Christian? By no means. If the oracles of God are true, if we are still to abide by 'the law and the testimony,' all these things, though when ennobled by faith in Christ, they are holy, and just, and good, yet without it are 'dung and dross.'

"This then have I learned in the ends of the earth, that I am fallen 'short of the glory of God;' that my whole heart is 'altogether corrupt and abominable,' and, consequently, my whole life; (seeing it cannot be, that 'an evil tree' should 'bring forth good fruit;') that my own works, my own sufferings, my own righteousness, are so far from reconciling me to an offended God, so far from making any atonement for the least of those sins which 'are more in number than the hairs of my head,' that the most specious of them need an atonement themselves, or they cannot abide his righteous judgment; that having the sentence of death in my heart, and having nothing in or of myself to plead, I have no hope but that of being justified freely 'through the redemption that is in Jesus;' I have no hope, but that if I seek, I shall find the Christ, and 'be found in him, not having my own righteousness, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.'

"If it be said that I have faith, (for many such things have I heard from many miserable comforters,) I answer, So have the devils—*a sort* of faith; but still they are strangers to the covenant of promise. So the apostles had even at Cana in Galilee, when Jesus first 'manifested forth his glory;' even then they, in a sort, 'believed on him;' but they had not then 'the faith that overcometh the world.' The faith I want is 'a sure trust and confidence in God, that through the merits of Christ, my sins are forgiven, and I reconciled to the favor of God. I want that faith which St. Paul recommends to all the world, especially in his epistle to the Romans—that faith which enables every one that hath it to cry out, 'I live not; but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.' I want that faith which none has, without knowing that he hath it; (though many imagine they have it, who have it not;) for whosoever hath it is freed from sin; the whole 'body of sin is destroyed' in him: he is freed from fear, 'having peace with God through Christ, and rejoicing in hope of the glory of God.' And he is freed from doubt, 'having the love of God shed abroad in his heart, through the Holy Ghost which is given unto him; which Spirit itself beareth witness with his spirit, that he is a child of God.' "*

A spirit thus breathing after God, and anxious to be taught "the way more perfectly," could not be left in its darkness and solicitude. A few days after his arrival in London, he met with Peter Bohler, a minister of the Moravian church. This was on February 7th, which he marks as "a day much to be remembered," because the conversation which he had with Bohler on the subject of saving faith, a subject probably brought on by himself, first opened his mind to true views on that subject, notwithstanding the objections with which he assaulted the statements of the Moravian teacher, and which caused Bohler more than once to exclaim, "My brother, that philosophy of yours must be purged away." At Oxford, whither he had gone to visit Charles, who was sick, he again met with his Moravian friend, "by whom," he says, "in the hand of the great God, I was clearly convinced of unbelief, of the want of that faith whereby alone we are saved with the full Christian salvation."

"He was now convinced that his faith had been too much separated from an evangelical view of the promises of a free justification, or pardon of sin, through the atonement and mediation of Christ alone, which was the reason why he had been held in continual bondage and fear."† In a few days he met Peter Bohler again—"who now," he says, "amazed me more and more, by the account he gave of the fruits of living faith, the holiness and happiness which he affirmed to attend it. The next morning I began the Greek Testament again, resolving to abide by 'the law and the testimony,' being confident that God would hereby show me whether this doctrine was of God."‡

In a fourth conversation with this excellent man, he was still more confirmed in the view, "that faith is, to use the words of our church, a sure trust and confidence which a man has in God, that, through the merit of Christ, his sins are forgiven, and he reconciled to the favor of God." Some of his objections to Bohler's statements on instantaneous conversion were also removed by a diligent examination of the Scriptures. "I had," he observes, "but one retreat left on this subject: Thus, I grant God wrought in the first ages of Christianity; but the times are changed. What reason have I to believe he works in the same manner now? But, on Sunday, 22d, I was beat out of this retreat, too, by the concurring evidence of several living witnesses, who testified God had so wrought in themselves, giving them in a moment such a faith in the blood of his Son, as translated them out of darkness into light, and from sin and fear into holiness and happiness. Here ended my disputing. I could now only cry out, 'Lord, help thou my unbelief!' "

* Journal. † Whitehead's Life. ‡ Journal.

He now began to declare that doctrine of faith which he had been taught; and those who were convinced of sin gladly received it. He was also much confirmed in the truth, by hearing the experience of Mr. Hutchins, of Pembroke college, and Mrs. Fox: "Two living witnesses," he says, "that God can, at least, if he does not always, give that faith whereof cometh salvation, in a moment, as lightning falling from heaven."*

Mr. Wesley and a few others now formed themselves into a religious society, which met in Fetter-Lane. But although they thus assembled with the Moravians, they remained members of the church of England; and afterwards, when some of the Moravian teachers introduced new doctrines, Mr. Wesley and his friends separated from them, and formed that distinct community which has since been known as "The Methodist Society." The rules of the Fetter-Lane society were printed under the title of "Orders of a Religious Society, meeting in Fetter-Lane; in obedience to the command of God by St. James, and by the advice of Peter Bohler, 1738."

As yet Mr. Wesley had not attained the blessing for which he so earnestly sought, and now with clearer views. His language as to himself, though still that of complaint, was become, in truth, the language of a broken and a contrite heart. It was no longer in the tone of a man disappointed as to the results of his own efforts, and thrown into distressing perplexity, as not knowing where to turn for help. He was now bowed in lowly sorrow before the throne; but he knew that it was "the throne of grace;" and his cry was that of the publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner." In a letter to a friend, he says:—

"I feel what you say, though not enough; for I am under the same condemnation. I see that the whole law of God is holy, just and good. I know every thought, every temper of my soul, ought to bear God's image and superscription. But how am I fallen from the glory of God! I feel that 'I am sold under sin.' I know that I too deserve nothing but wrath, being full of all abominations, and having no good thing in me to atone for them, or to remove the wrath of God. All my works, my righteousness, my prayers need an atonement for themselves. So that my mouth is stopped. I have nothing to plead. God is holy; I am unholy. God is a consuming fire: I am altogether a sinner, meet to be consumed.

"Yet I hear a voice, (and is it not the voice of God?) saying, 'Believe and thou shalt be saved. He that believeth is passed from death unto life. God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life.'"†

In this state of mind he continued till May the 24th, 1738, and then gives the following account of his conversion:—

"I think, it was about five this morning, that I opened my Testament on those words, 'There are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature.' 2 Peter i. 4. Just as I went out, I opened it again on those words, 'Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.' In the afternoon I was asked to go to St. Paul's. The anthem was, 'Out of the deep have I called unto thee, O Lord; Lord, hear my voice. O let thine ears consider well the voice of my complaint. If thou, Lord, wilt be extreme to mark what is done amiss, O Lord, who may abide it? But there is mercy with thee; therefore thou shalt be feared. O Israel, trust in the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption. And he shall redeem Israel from all his sins.'

"In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate-street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation: and an assurance was given me, that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the 'law of sin and death.'

"I began to pray with all my might, for those who had in a more especial manner despitefully used me, and persecuted me. I then testified openly to all there, what I now first felt in my heart. But it was not long before the enemy suggested, 'This cannot be faith, for where is thy joy?' Then was I taught, that peace and victory over sin are essential to faith in the Captain of our salvation; but that as to the transports of joy, that usually attend the beginning of it, especially in those who have mourned deeply, God sometimes giveth, sometimes withholdeth them, according to the counsels of his own will."*

After this he had some struggles with doubt; but he proceeded from "strength to strength," till he could say, "Now I was always conqueror." His experience, nurtured by habitual prayer, and deepened by unwearied exertion in the cause of his Saviour, settled into that steadfast faith and solid peace, which the grace of God perfected in him to the close of his long and active life.

His brother Charles was also made partaker of the same grace. They had passed together through the briers and thorns, through the perplexities and shadows of the legal wilderness, and the hour of their deliverance was not far separated. Bohler visited Charles in his sickness at Oxford, but "the Pharisee within" was somewhat offended when the honest German shook his head at learning that his hope of salvation rested upon "his best endeavors." After his recovery, the reading of Halyburton's Life produced in him a sense of his want of that faith which brings "peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." Bohler visited him again in London, and he began seriously to consider the doctrine which he urged upon him. His convictions of his state of danger, as a man unjustified before God, and of his need of the faith whereof cometh salvation, increased, and he spent his whole time in discoursing on these subjects, in prayer, and reading the Scriptures. Luther on the Galatians then fell into his hands, and on reading the preface he observes:—

"I marvelled that we were so soon and entirely removed from him that called us into the grace of Christ, unto another gospel. Who would believe that our church had been founded on this important article of justification by faith alone? I am astonished I should ever think this a new doctrine; especially while our articles and homilies stand unrepealed, and the key of knowledge is not yet taken away. From this time I endeavored to ground as many of our friends as came to see me in this fundamental truth—salvation by faith alone, not an idle, dead faith, but a faith which works by love, and is incessantly productive of all good works and all holiness."†

"On Whit-Sunday, May 21st, he awoke in hope and expectation of soon attaining the object of his wishes, the knowledge of God reconciled in Christ Jesus. At nine o'clock his brother and some friends came to him and sung a hymn suited to the day. When they left him he betook himself to prayer. Soon afterwards a person came and said, in a very solemn manner, 'Believe in the name of Jesus of Nazareth and thou shalt be healed of all thine infir-

* Journal. † Ibid.

* Journal. † Ibid.

mities.' The words went through his heart, and animated him with confidence. He looked into the Scripture, and read, 'Now, Lord, what is my hope? truly my hope is even in thee.' He then cast his eye on these words, 'He hath put a new song into my mouth, even thanksgiving unto our God; many shall see it and fear, and put their trust in the Lord.' Afterwards he opened upon Isaiah xl. 1.: 'Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith our God; speak comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned, for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins.' In reading these passages of Scripture, he was enabled to view Christ as set forth to be a propitiation for his sins, through faith in his blood; and he received that peace and rest in God which he had so earnestly sought.

"The next day he greatly rejoiced in reading the 107th Psalm, so nobly descriptive, he observes, of what God had done for his soul. He had a very humbling view of his own weakness; but was enabled to contemplate Christ in his power to save to the uttermost all those who come unto God by him." *

Such was the manner in which these excellent men, whom God had been long preparing for the great work of reviving scriptural Christianity throughout these lands, were at length themselves brought "into the liberty of the sons of God." On the account thus given, a few observations may not be misplaced.

It is easy to assail with ridicule such disclosures of the exercises of minds impressed with the great concern of salvation, and seeking for deliverance from a load of anxiety in "a way which they had not known;" and flippantly to resolve all these shadowings of doubt, these dawnings of hope, and the joyous influence of the full day of salvation, as some have done, into fancy, nervous affection, or natural constitution. To every truly serious mind, these will however appear subjects of a momentous character; and no one will proceed either safely or soberly to judge of them, who does not previously inquire into the doctrine of the New Testament on the subject of human salvation, and apply the principles which he may find there, authenticated by infallible inspiration, to the examination of such cases. If it be there declared that the state of man by nature, and so long as he remains unforgiven by his offended God, is a state of awful peril, then the all-absorbing seriousness of that concern for deliverance from spiritual danger, which was exhibited by the Wesleys, is a feeling becoming our condition, and is the only rational frame of mind which we can cultivate. If we are required to be of "a humble and broken spirit," and if the very root of a true repentance lies in a "godly sorrow" for sin; then their humiliations and self-reproaches were in correspondence with a state of heart which is enjoined upon all by an authority which we cannot dispute. If the appointed method of man's salvation, laid down in the gospel, be *gratuitous pardon through faith in the merits of Christ's sacrifice*, and if a method of seeking justification by works of moral obedience to the divine law, be plainly placed by St. Paul in opposition to this, and declared to be vain and fruitless; then, if in this way the Wesleys sought their justification before God, we see how true their own statement must of necessity have been, that with all their efforts they could obtain no solid peace of mind, no deliverance from the enslaving fear of death and final punishment, because they sought that by imperfect works which God has appointed to be attained by faith alone. If it be said, that their case was not parallel to that of the self-righteous Jews, who did not receive the Christian religion, and therefore that the argument of the apostle does not apply to those who believe the gospel, it will remain to be inquired, whether the circumstance of a mere belief in the Christian system, when added to works of imperfect obedience, makes any essential difference in the case; or, in other words, whether justification may not be sought by endeavors to obey the law, although the Judaism necessarily implied in it may be arrayed in the garb of Christian terms and phrases. If indeed by "works of the law" St. Paul had meant only the ceremonial observances of the Jewish church, the case would be altered; but his epistle to the Romans puts it beyond all doubt, that in his argument respecting justification he speaks of the moral law, since his grand reason to prove that by the works of the law no man can be justified, is, that "by the law is the knowledge of sin." That law is recognized and embodied in the New Testament, but its first office there is to give "the knowledge of sin," that men may be convinced, or, as St. Paul forcibly says, "slain" by it; and it stands there in connection with the atonement for sin made by the sacrifice upon the cross. Nor is the faith which delivers men from the condemnation of a law which has been broken, and never can be perfectly kept by man, a mere *belief* in the truth of the doctrine of Christ, but *reliance* upon his sacrifice, in which consists that personal act by which we become parties to the covenant of free and gratuitous justification, and which then only stands sure to us, because then only we accept the mercy of God, as exercised towards us through Christ, and on the prescribed conditions. If therefore in the matter of our justification, like the Wesleys before they obtained clearer light, and the divines who were their early guides, we change the office of the moral law, though we may still regard it as in some way connected with the gospel, and call it by the general term of Christianity, of which it in truth forms the preceptive part, and resort to it, not that we may be convinced of the greatness of our sins, and of our utter inability to commend ourselves to a holy God, the requirements of whose law have never been relaxed; but as the means of qualifying ourselves by efforts of obedience to it, for the reception of divine mercy, and acquiring a fitness and worthiness for the exercise of grace towards us; then we reject the perfection and suitableness of the atonement of Christ; we refuse to commit our whole case in the matter of our justification to that atonement, according to the appointment of God; and as much seek justification by works of the law, as did the Jews themselves. Such was the case with the Wesleys, as stated by themselves. Theirs was not indeed a state of heartless formality, and self-deluding Pharisaism, aiming only at external obedience. It was just the reverse of this: they were awakened to a sense of danger, and they aimed, nay, struggled with intense efforts after universal holiness, inward and outward. But it was not a state of salvation; and if we find a middle state like this described in the Scriptures; a state in transit from dead formality to living faith and moral deliverance, the question with respect to the truth of their representations, as to their former state of experience, is settled. Such a middle state we see plainly depicted by the apostle Paul in the seventh chapter of the epistle to the Romans. There the mind of the person described "consents to the law that it is good," but finds in it only greater discoveries of his sinfulness and danger; there the effort too is after universal holiness: "to will is present," but the power is wanting; every struggle binds the chain tighter; sighs and groans are extorted till self-despair succeeds, and the true Deliverer is seen and trusted in—"O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" I

* Whitehead's Life.

thank God through Jesus Christ my Lord. * The deliverance also in the case described by St. Paul is marked with the same characters as that exhibited in the conversion of the Wesleys, "There is now no *condemnation* to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh; but after the Spirit; for the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."—"Therefore being justified by faith we have *peace* with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." Every thing in the account of the change wrought in the two brothers, and several of their friends about the same time, answers therefore to the New Testament. Nor was their experience, or the doctrine upon which it was founded, new, although in that age of declining piety unhappily not common. The Moravian statement of justifying faith, was that of all the churches of the Reformation; and through Peter Bohler Mr. Wesley came first to understand the true doctrine of that church of which he was a clergyman. His mind was never so fully imbued with the letter and spirit of that article in which she has so truly interpreted St. Paul, as when he learned from him, almost in the words of the article itself, that "we are justified by faith only;" and that this is "a most wholesome doctrine." For the joyous change of Mr. Wesley's feelings, upon his persuasion of his personal interest in Christ through faith, those persons who, like Dr. Southey, † have bestowed upon it several philosophic solutions, might have found a better reason had they either consulted St. Paul, who says, "We *joy* in God, by whom we have received the reconciliation," or their own church, which has emphatically declared that the doctrine of justification by faith is not only very wholesome, but also "very full of *comfort*."

CHAPTER V.

From this time Mr. Wesley commenced that laborious and glorious ministry, which directly or indirectly was made the instrument of the salvation of a multitude, not to be numbered till "the day which shall make all things manifest." That which he had experienced he preached to others with the confidence of one who had "the witness in himself;" and with a fulness of sympathy for all who wandered in paths of darkness and distress, which could not but be inspired by the recollection of his own former perplexities.

At this period the religious and moral state of the nation was such as to give the most serious concern to the few remaining faithful. There is no need to draw a picture darker than the truth, to add importance to the labors of the two Wesleys, Mr. Whitefield, and their associates. The view here taken has often been drawn by pens unconnected with and hostile to Methodism.

The reformation from Popery which so much promoted the instruction of the populace in Scotland, did much less for the people of England, a great majority of whose lower classes, at the time of the rise of Methodism, were even ignorant of the art of reading; in many places were semi-barbarous in their manners; and had been rescued from the superstitions of Popery, only to be left ignorant of every thing beyond a few vague and general notions of religion. Great numbers were destitute even of these; and there are still agricultural districts in the southern and western counties, where the case is not even at this moment much improved. A clergyman has lately asserted in print, that in many villages of Devonshire the only form of prayer still taught their children by the peasantry are the goodly verses handed down from their popish ancestors,—

"Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John,
Bless the bed that I lie on," &c.

The degree of ignorance on all scriptural subjects, and of dull, uninquiring irreligiousness which prevails in many other parts, is well known to those who have turned their attention to such inquiries, and would be incredible to those who have not.* A great impression was made in many places by the zealous preachers who sprang forth at the reformation; and in the large towns especially, they turned many of the people "from darkness to light." But the great body of the popish parish priests went round with the reformation, without conviction, and performed the new service, as they performed the old, in order to hold fast their livings. As what was called Puritanism prevailed, more zealous preaching and more careful instructions were employed; and by such ministers as the two thousand who were silenced by the act of uniformity, with many equally excellent men who conformed to the re-established church, a great body of religious and well-instructed people were raised up; and indeed before the civil wars commenced, the nation might be said to be in a state of hopeful moral improvement. These troubles however arose before the effect produced upon a state of society sunk very low in vice and ignorance, could be widely extended; and the keen and ardent political feelings which were then excited, and the demoralizing effects of civil warfare, greatly injured the spirit of piety, by occupying the attention of men, and rousing their passions by other, and often unhallowed, subjects. The effect was as injurious upon the advocates of the old church discipline as upon those of the new, and probably worse; because it did not meet in them, for the most part, with principles so genuine and active to resist it. In many of the latter, Antinomianism and fanaticism became conspicuous; but in the former a total irreligion, or a

* "All the time I was at Savannah I was thus beating the air. Being ignorant of the righteousness of Christ, which, by a living faith in him, bringeth salvation 'to every one that believeth,' I sought to establish my own righteousness, and so labored in the fire all my days. I was now properly under the law; I knew that 'the law of God was spiritual;' 'I consented to it that it was good. Yea, I delighted in it, after the inner man.' Yet I was 'carnal, sold under sin.' Every day was I constrained to cry out, 'What I do, I allow not; for what I would I do not, but what I hate, that I do. To will is indeed present with me; but how to perform that which is good, I find not. For the good which I would I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do. I find a law that when I would do good, evil is present with me: Even the law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and still bringing me into captivity to the law of sin.'

"In this state, I was indeed fighting continually, but not conquering. Before, I had willingly served sin; now it was unwillingly; but still I served it. I fell, and rose, and fell again. Sometimes I was overcome, and in heaviness: sometimes I overcame, and was in joy. For as in the former state, I had some foretastes of the terrors of the law, so had I in this of the comforts of the gospel. During this whole struggle between nature and grace, which had now continued above ten years, I had many remarkable returns to prayer, especially when I was in trouble: I had many sensible comforts, which are indeed no other than short anticipations of the life of faith. But I was still under the law, not under grace, the state most who are called Christians are content to live and die in. For I was only striving with, not freed from, sin: Neither had I 'the witness of the Spirit with my spirit.' And indeed could not; for 'I sought it not by faith, but, as it were, by the works of the law.'"—*Wesley's Journal.*

† Life of Wesley.

* By far the greater number of the peasants in Hampshire and Berkshire, lately tried under the Special Commissions for riots and stack-burning, were found unable to read.

lifeless formality, produced a haughty dislike of the spiritualities of religion, or a sneering contempt of them. The mischief was completed by the restoration of the Stuarts; for whatever advantages were gained by that event in a civil sense, it let in a flood of licentiousness and impiety which swept away almost every barrier that had been raised in the public mind by the labors of former ages. Infidelity began its ravages upon the principles of the higher and middle classes; the mass of the people remained uneducated, and were Christians but in name, and by virtue of their baptism; whilst many of the great doctrines of the reformation were banished both from the universities and the pulpits. Archbishop Leighton complains that his "church was a fair carcass without a spirit;" and Burnet observes, that in his time "the clergy had less authority, and were under more contempt, than those of any church in Europe; for they were much the most remiss in their labors, and the least severe in their lives." Nor did the case much amend up to the period of which we speak. Dr. Southey says, that "from the restoration to the accession of the house of Hanover, the English church could boast of its brightest ornaments and ablest defenders, men who have never been surpassed in erudition, in eloquence, or in strength and subtlety of mind." This is true: but it is equally so, that, with a very few exceptions, these great powers were not employed to teach, defend, and inculcate the doctrines of that church on personal religion as it is taught in her liturgy, her articles, and her homilies, but what often was subversive of them; and the very authority therefore which such writers acquired by their learned and able works was in many respects mischievous. They stood between the people and the better divines of the earlier age of the church, and put them out of sight; and they set an example of preaching which, being generally followed, placed the pulpit and the desk at perpetual variance, and reduced an evangelical liturgy to a dead form which was repeated without thought, or so explained as to take away its meaning. A great proportion of the clergy, whatever other learning they might possess, were grossly ignorant of theology, and contented themselves with reading short unmeaning sermons, purchased or pilfered, and formed upon the lifeless theological system of the day. A little Calvinism remained in the church, and a little evangelical Arminianism; but the prevalent divinity was Pelagian, or what very nearly approached it. Natural religion was the great subject of study, when theology was studied at all, and was made the test and standard of revealed truth. The doctrine of the *opus operatum* of the Papists, as to sacraments, was the faith of the divines of the older school; and a refined system of ethics, unconnected with Christian motives, and disjoined from the vital principles of religion in the heart, was the favorite theory of the modern. The body of the clergy neither knew nor cared about systems of any kind. In a great number of instances they were negligent and immoral; often grossly so. The populace of the large towns were ignorant and profligate; and the inhabitants of villages added to ignorance and profligacy brutish and barbarous manners. A more striking instance of the rapid deterioration of religious light and influence in a country scarcely occurs, than in our own, from the restoration till the rise of Methodism. It affected not only the church, but the dissenting sects in no ordinary degree. The Presbyterians had commenced their course through Arianism down to Socinianism; and those who held the doctrines of Calvin had, in too many instances, by a course of hot-house planting, luxuriated them into the fatal and disgusting errors of Antinomianism. There were indeed many happy exceptions; but this was the general state of religion and morals in the country, when the Wesleys, Whitefield, and a few kindred spirits came forth, ready to sacrifice ease, reputation, and even life itself, to produce a reformation.

Before Mr. Wesley entered upon the career which afterwards distinguished him, and having no preconceived plan or course of conduct, but to seek good for himself and to do good to others, he visited the Moravian settlements in Germany. On his journey he formed an acquaintance with several pious ministers in Holland and Germany; and at Marienbourn was greatly edified by the conversation of count Zinzendorf, and others of the brethren, of whose views he did not however in all respects even then approve. From thence he proceeded to Hernhuth, where he staid a fortnight, conversing with the elders, and observing the economy of that church, part of which with modifications he afterwards introduced among his own societies. The sermons of Christian David especially interested him; and of one of them, on "the ground of our faith," he gives the substance; which we may insert, both as excellent in itself, and as it so well agrees with what Mr. Wesley afterwards uniformly taught:—

"The word of reconciliation which the apostles preached, as the foundation of all they taught, was, that 'we are reconciled to God, not by our own works, nor by our own righteousness, but wholly and solely by the blood of Christ.'

"But you will say, must I not grieve and mourn for my sins? Must I not humble myself before my God? Is not this just and right? And must I not first do this before I can expect God to be reconciled to me? I answer, it is just and right. You must be humbled before God. You must have a broken and contrite heart. But then observe, this is not your own work. Do you grieve that you are a sinner? This is the work of the Holy Ghost. Are you contrite? Are you humbled before God? Do you indeed mourn, and is your heart broken within you? All this worketh the self-same Spirit.

"Observe again, this is not the foundation. It is not this by which you are justified. This is not the righteousness, this is no part of the righteousness, by which you are reconciled unto God. You grieve for your sins. You are deeply humble. Your heart is broken. Well. But all this is nothing to your justification.* The remission of your sins is not owing to this cause, either in whole or in part. Nay, observe farther, that it may hinder your justification: that is, if you build any thing upon it; if you think, I must be so or so contrite; I must grieve more, before I can be justified. Understand this well. To think you must be more contrite, more humbled, more grieved, more sensible of the weight of sin, before you can be justified, is, to lay your contrition, your grief, your humiliation, for the foundation of your being justified: at least for a part of the foundation. Therefore it hinders your justification; and a hinderance it is which must be removed, before you can lay the right foundation. The right foundation is, not your contrition, (though that is not your own,) not your righteousness, nothing of your own; nothing that is wrought in you by the Holy Ghost; but it is something without you, viz., the righteousness and blood of Christ.

"For this is the word, 'To him that believeth on God, that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted

*"This is not guarded. These things do not merit our justification, but they are absolutely necessary in order to it. God never pardons the impenitent."—*Wesley's Journal.*

for righteousness.' See ye not, that the foundation is nothing in us? There is no connection between God and the ungodly. There is no tie to unite them. They are altogether separate from each other. They have nothing in common. There is nothing less or more in the ungodly, to join them to God. Works, righteousness, contrition? No. Ungodliness only. This then do, if you will lay a right foundation:—Go straight to Christ with all your ungodliness. Tell him, Thou whose eyes are as a flame of fire, searching my heart, seest that I am ungodly. I plead nothing else. I do not say, I am humble or contrite: but I am ungodly. Therefore bring me to Him that justifieth the ungodly. Let thy blood be the propitiation for me; for there is nothing in me but ungodliness.

"Here is a mystery. Here the wise men of the world are lost, are taken in their own craftiness. This the learned of the world cannot comprehend. It is foolishness unto them. Sin is the only thing which divides men from God. Sin (let him that heareth understand) is the only thing which unites them to God; that is, the only thing which moves the Lamb of God to have compassion upon them, and by his blood to give them access to the Father.

"This is the word of reconciliation which we preach. This is the foundation which never can be moved. By faith we are built upon this foundation: and this faith also is the gift of God. It is his free gift, which he now and ever giveth to every one that is willing to receive it. And when they have received this gift of God, then their hearts will melt for sorrow that they have offended him. But this gift of God lives in the heart, not in the head. The faith of the head, learned from men or books, is nothing worth. It brings neither remission of sins, nor peace with God. Labor then to believe with your whole heart. So shall you have redemption through the blood of Christ. So shall you be cleansed from all sin. So shall ye go on from strength to strength, being renewed day by day in righteousness and all true holiness."*

"I would gladly," says Mr. Wesley, "have spent my life here; but my Master calling me to labor in another part of his vineyard, I was constrained to take my leave of this happy place. O when shall this Christianity cover the earth, as the 'waters cover the sea?'" He adds in another place, "I was exceedingly comforted and strengthened by the conversation of this lovely people; and returned to England more fully determined to spend my life in testifying the gospel of the grace of God."†

He arrived in London in September, 1738. His future course of life does not appear to have been shaped out in his mind; no indication of this appears in any of his letters, or other communication: so little ground is there for the insinuation, which has been so often made, that he early formed the scheme of making himself the head of a sect. This, even those inconsistencies, considering him as a churchman, into which circumstances afterwards impelled him, sufficiently refute. That he was averse to settle as a parish minister, is certain; and the man who regarded "the world as his parish," must have had large views of usefulness. That he kept in mind the opinion of the bishop who ordained him, that he was at liberty to decline settling as a parish priest, provided he thought that he could serve the church better in any other way, is very probable; and if he had any fixed purpose at all, at this time, beyond what circumstances daily opened to him, and from which he might infer the path of duty, it was to attempt to revive the spirit of religion in the church to which he belonged and which he loved, by preaching "the gospel of the grace of God," in as many of her pulpits as he should be permitted to occupy. This was the course he pursued. Wherever he was invited, he preached the obsolete doctrine of salvation by grace through faith. In London great crowds followed him; the clergy generally excepted to his statement of the doctrine; the genteeler part of his audiences, whether they attended to the sermon or not, were offended at the bustle of crowded congregations; and soon almost all the churches, of the metropolis, one after another, were shut against him. He had, however, largely labored in various parts of the metropolis in churches, rooms, houses, and prisons; and the effects produced were powerful and lasting. Soon after, we find him at Oxford, employed in writing to his friends abroad, communicating the good news of a great awakening both in London and in that city. To Dr. Koker, of Rotterdam, he writes, Oct. 13, 1738: "His blessed Spirit has wrought so powerfully both in London and Oxford, that there is a general awakening, and multitudes are crying out, What must we do to be saved? So that till our gracious Master sendeth more laborers into his harvest, all my time is much too little for them." And to the church at Hernhuth, he writes under the same date: "We are endeavoring here, also, by the grace which is given us, to be followers of you, as ye are of Christ. Fourteen were added to us since our return; so that we have now eight bands of men, consisting of fifty-six persons, all of whom seek for salvation only in the blood of Christ. As yet we have only two small bands of women, the one of three, the other of five persons. But here are many others who only wait till we have leisure to instruct them how they may most effectually build up one another, in the faith and love of Him who gave himself for them.

"Though my brother and I are not permitted to preach in most of the churches in London, yet, thanks be to God, there are others left, wherein we have liberty to speak the truth as it is in Jesus. Likewise every evening, and on set evenings in the week, at two several places, we publish the word of reconciliation, sometimes to twenty or thirty, sometimes to fifty or sixty, sometimes to three or four hundred persons, met together to hear it."

In December he met Mr. Whitefield, who had returned to London from America, "and they again took sweet counsel together." In the spring of the next year, he followed Mr. Whitefield to Bristol, where he had preached with great success in the open air. Mr. Wesley first expounded to a little society,* accustomed to meet in Nicholas

* Journal. † Ibid.

* The "Societies" which Mr. Wesley mentions in his journals as visited by him, for the purpose of expounding the Scriptures, in London and Bristol, were the remains of those which Dr. Woodward describes, in an account first published about 1698 or 1699. They began about the year 1667, among a few young men in London, who, under Dr. Horneck's preaching, and the morning lectures in Cornhill, were brought, says Dr. Woodward, "to a very affecting sense of their sins, and began to apply themselves in a very serious way to religious thoughts and purposes." They were advised by their ministers to meet together weekly for "good discourse;" and rules were drawn up "for the better regulation of these meetings." They contributed weekly for the use of the poor, and stewards were appointed to take care of and to disburse their charities. In the latter part of the reign of James II., they met with discouragement; but on the accession of William and Mary, they acquired new vigor. When Dr. Woodward wrote his account, there were about forty of these societies in activity within the bills of mortality, a few in the country, and nine in Ireland. Out of these societies about twenty associations arose, in London, for the prosecution and suppression of vice; and both these, and the private societies for religious edification, had for a time

street; and the next day he overcame his scruples, and preached abroad, on an eminence near the city, to more than two thousand persons. On this practice he observes, that though till lately he had been so tenacious of every point relating to decency and order, that he should have thought the saving of souls almost a sin, if it had not been done in a church, yet "I have since seen abundant reason to adore the wise providence of God herein, making a way for myriads of people, who never troubled any church, or were likely so to do, to hear that word which they soon found to be the power of God unto salvation."

The manner in which he filled up his time, may be seen from the following account of his weekly labors, at this period, at or near Bristol. "My ordinary employment in public was now as follows. Every morning I read prayers and preached at Newgate. Every evening I expounded a portion of Scripture, at one or more of the societies. On Monday in the afternoon I preached abroad near Bristol. On Tuesday at Bath and Two-Mile-Hill, alternately. On Wednesday at Baptist-Mills.—Every other Thursday, near Pensford. Every other Friday, in another part of Kingswood. On Saturday in the afternoon, and Sunday morning in the Bowling-Green. On Sunday at eleven, near Hannam-Mount, at two at Clifton, at five at Rose-Green. And hitherto, as my day is, so is my strength."*

During Mr. Wesley's visit to Germany, his brother Charles was zealously employed in preaching the same doctrines, and with equal zeal, in the churches in London; and in holding meetings for prayer and expounding the Scriptures. At this time he also visited Oxford, and was made useful to several of his old college friends. When his brother returned from Hernhuth, he met him with great joy in London, and they "compared their experience in the things of God." The doctrine of predestination on which so many disputes have arisen in the church, and which was soon to be warmly debated among the first Methodists, was soon after started at a meeting for exposition. Mr. Charles contented himself with simply protesting against it. He now first began to preach extempore. In a conference which the brothers had with the bishop of London, they cleared up some complaints as to their doctrine, which he had received against them, and were upon the whole treated by him with liberality. He strongly disapproved, however, of their practice of re-baptizing persons who had been baptized by Dissenters, in which they exhibited the firm hold which their high church feelings still retained upon their minds. His lordship showed himself, in this respect, not only more liberal, but better versed in ecclesiastical law and usage. The bishop at this, and at other interviews, guarded them strongly against Antinomianism, of which, however, they were in no danger. He was probably alarmed, as many had been, at the stress they laid on faith, not knowing the *necessary* connection of the faith they preached with universal holiness. Mr. Whitefield was at this time at Oxford, and pressed Charles earnestly to accept a college living; which, as Dr. Whitehead justly observes, "gives pretty clear evidence that no plan of itinerant preaching was yet fixed on, nor indeed thought of: had any such plan been in agitation among them, it is very certain Mr. Whitefield would not have urged this advice on Mr. Charles Wesley, whom he loved as a brother, and whose labors he highly esteemed."*

About this time some disputes took place, in the Fetter-Lane society, as to lay-preaching, and Mr. Charles Wesley, in the absence of his brother, declared warmly against it. He had also, whilst Mr. John Wesley was still at Bristol, a painful interview at Lambeth, with the archbishop of Canterbury. His grace took no exceptions to his doctrine, but condemned the irregularity of his proceedings, and even hinted at proceeding to excommunication. This threw him into great perplexity of mind, until Mr. Whitefield, with characteristic boldness, urged him to preach "in the fields the next Sunday: by which step he would break down the bridge, render his retreat difficult or impossible, and be forced to fight his way forward." This advice he followed. "June 24th, I prayed," says he, "and went forth in the name of Jesus Christ. I found near a thousand helpless sinners waiting for the word in Moorfields. I invited them in my Master's words, as well as name: *Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden; and I will give you rest.* The Lord was with me, even me, the meanest of his messengers, according to his promise. At St. Paul's, the psalms, lessons, &c. for the day, put new life into me: and so did the sacrament. My load was gone, and all my doubts and scruples. God shone on my path, and I knew this was his will concerning me. I walked to Kennington Common, and cried to multitudes upon multitudes, *Repent ye, and believe the gospel.* The Lord was my strength, and my mouth, and my wisdom. O that all would therefore praise the Lord for his goodness!"

At Oxford also, he had to sustain the severity of the dean on the subject of field-preaching; but he seized the opportunity of bearing his testimony to the doctrine of justification by faith, by preaching with great boldness before the university. On his return to London, he resumed field-preaching in Moorfields, and on Kennington Common. At one time it was computed that as many as ten thousand persons were collected, and great numbers were roused to a serious inquiry after religion. His word was occasionally attended with an overwhelming influence.

That great public attention should be excited by these extraordinary and novel proceedings; and that the dignitaries of the church, and the advocates of stillness and order should take the alarm at them, as "doubting whereunto this thing might grow," were inevitable consequences. A doctrine so obsolete, that on its revival it was regarded as new and dangerous, was now publicly proclaimed as the doctrine of the apostles and reformers; the con-

* Whitehead's Life.

much encouragement from several bishops, and from the queen herself. By their rules they were obliged, at their weekly meetings, to discourse only on such subjects as tended to practical holiness, and to avoid all controversy; and besides relieving the poor, they were to promote schools, and the catechising of "young and ignorant persons in their respective families." These societies certainly opened a favorable prospect for the revival of religion in the Church of England: but, whether they were cramped by clerical jealousy, lest laymen should become too active in spiritual concerns; or that from their being bound by their orders to prosecute vice by calling in the aid of the magistrate, their moral influence among the populace was counteracted; they appear to have declined from about 1710; and although several societies still remained in London, Bristol, and a few other places, at the time when Mr. Wesley commenced his labors, they were not in a state of growth and activity. They had, however, been the means of keeping the spark of piety from entire extinction. The sixth edition of Dr. Woodward's account of these societies was published in 1744; but from that time we hear no more of them; they either gradually died away, or were absorbed in the Methodist societies. This, at least, was the case with several of them in London and Bristol; and with that of St. Ives, in Cornwall.

* Journal.

sciousness of forgiveness of sins was professed by many, and enforced as the possible attainment of all; several clergymen, of talents and learning which would have given influence to any cause, endued with mighty zeal, and with a restless activity, instead of settling in parishes, were preaching in various churches and private rooms, and to vast multitudes in the open air, alternately in the metropolis, and at Bristol, Oxford, and the interjacent places. They alarmed the careless by bringing before them the solemnities of the last judgment; they explained the spirituality of that law, upon which the self-righteous trusted for salvation, and convinced them that the justification of man was by the grace of God alone through faith; and they roused the dozing adherents of mere forms, by teaching that true religion implies a change of the whole heart wrought by the Holy Ghost. With equal zeal and earnestness, they checked the pruriency of the Calvinistic system, as held by many Dissenters, by insisting that the law which cannot justify, was still the rule of life, and the standard of holiness to all true believers; and taught that mere doctrinal views of evangelical truth, however correct, were quite as vain and unprofitable as Pharisaism and formality, when made a substitute for vital faith, spirituality, and practical holiness. All this zeal was supported and made more noticeable, by the moral elevation of their character. Their conduct was scrupulously hallowed; their spirit gentle, tender, and sympathizing; their courage, bold and undaunted; their patience, proof against all reproach, hardships, persecutions; their charities to the poor unbounded to the full extent of all their resources; their labors were wholly gratuitous; and their wonderful activity and endurance of the fatigues of rapid travelling, seemed to destroy the distance of place, and to give them a sort of ubiquity in the vast circuit which they had then adopted as the field of their labors. For all these reasons, they "were men to be wondered at," even in this the infancy of their career; and as their ardor was increased by the effects which followed, the conversion of great numbers to God, of which the most satisfactory evidence was afforded, it disappointed those who anticipated that their zeal would soon cool, and that, "shorn of their strength" by opposition, reproach, and exhausting labors, they would become "like other men."

An infidel or semi-christian philosophy has its theories at hand to account for the appearance and conduct of such extraordinary men. If their own supposed "artifices," and the "temptation to place themselves at the head of a sect," will not solve the case; it then resorts "to the circumstances of the age," or to "that restless activity and ambition" which finds in them "a promising sphere of action, and is attracted onward by its first successes." Even many serious churchmen of later times, who contend that the great men of the reformation were raised up by divine Providence in mercy to the world, are kept by sectarian prejudices from acknowledging a similar providential leading in the case of the Wesleys, Whitefield, and Howell Harris, because the whole of the good effected, has not rested within their own pale, and all the sheep collected out of the wilderness have not been gathered into their own fold. The sober Christian will, however, resort to the first principles of his own religion in order to form his judgment. He will acknowledge that the Lord of the harvest has the prerogative of "sending forth his laborers;" that men who change the religious aspect of whole nations cannot be the offspring of chance, or the creation of circumstances; that, whatever there may be of personal fitness in them for the work, as in the eminent natural and acquired talents of St. Paul; and whatever there may be in circumstances to favor their usefulness, these things do not shut out the special agency of God, but make it the more manifest; since the first more strikingly marks his agency in preparing his own servants, and training his soldiers; and the second, his wisdom in choosing the times of their appearance, and the scenes of their labors, and thus setting before them "an open door, and effectual." Nor can it be allowed, if we abide by the doctrine of the Scriptures, that a real spiritual good could have been so extensively and uniformly effected, and "multitudes turned to the Lord," unless God had been with the instruments, seconding their labors, and "giving his own testimony to the word of his grace." The hand of God is equally conspicuous in connecting the leading events of their earlier history with their future usefulness. They were men "separated to the gospel of God;" and every devout and grateful Christian will not cease to recognize in their appearance, labors, and successes, the mercy of God to a land where "truth had fallen in the streets," and the people were sitting in darkness, and in the shadow of death.

CHAPTER VI.

We left Mr. Wesley at Bristol, in the summer of 1739, to which scene of labor, after a visit to London, he again returned. Kingswood was mentioned in the account given by Mr. Wesley, in the preceding chapter, of his labors; and in this district, inhabited by colliers, and, from its rudeness, a terror to the neighborhood, the preaching of the two brothers, and of Mr. Whitefield, was eminently successful. The colliers were even proverbial for wickedness; but many of them became truly exemplary for their piety. These had been exhorted, it seems, to go to Bristol to receive the sacrament; but their numbers were so considerable that the Bristol clergy,* averse to the additional labor imposed upon them, repelled them from the communion, on the plea that they did not belong to their parishes.

The effect of the leaven which had thus been placed in this mass of barbarism was made conspicuous in the following year, in the case of a riot, of which Mr. Charles Wesley gives the following account. Being informed that the colliers had risen, on account of the dearness of corn, and were marching for Bristol, he rode out to meet them and talk with them. Many seemed disposed to return with him to the school which had been built for their children; but the most desperate rushed violently upon them, beating them, and driving them away from their pacific adviser. He adds, "I rode up to a ruffian, who was striking one of our colliers, and prayed him rather to strike me. He answered, 'No, not for all the world,' and was quite overcome. I turned upon another, who struck my horse, and he also sunk into a lamb. Wherever I turned, Satan's cause lost ground, so that they were obliged to make one general assault, and the violent colliers forced the quiet ones into the town. I seized one of the tallest, and earnestly besought him to follow me. Yes, he said, that he would, all the world over. I pressed about six into the service. We met several parties, and stopped and exhorted them to follow us; and gleaning some from every company, we increased as we marched on singing to the school. From one

* Several of the Bristol clergy were at that time of a persecuting character. They induced a captain Williams, the master of a vessel trading to Georgia, to make an affidavit of some statements to the disadvantage of Mr. Wesley, in the affair of Mrs. Williamson; but they took care that he should set sail before they published it. This led to the publication of Mr. Wesley's first journal, as he states in the preface. In that journal he gave his own account of the matter, and they were silenced.

till three o'clock we spent in prayer, that evil might be prevented, and the lion chained. Then news was brought us that the colliers were returned in peace. They had walked quietly into the city, without sticks or the least violence. A few of the better sort of them went to the mayor and told their grievance; then they all returned as they came, without noise or disturbance. All who saw it were amazed. Nothing could more clearly have shown the change wrought among them than this conduct on such an occasion. "I found afterwards that all our colliers to a man had been forced away. Having learned of Christ not to resist evil, they went a mile with those who compelled them, rather than free themselves by violence. One man, the rioters dragged out of his sick bed, and threw him into the fish pond. Near twenty of Mr. Willis' men they had prevailed on, by threatening to fill up their pits, and bury them alive if they did not come up and bear them company."—"It was a happy circumstance that they forced so many of the Methodist colliers to go with them; as these, by their advice and example, restrained the savage fury of the others. This undoubtedly was the true cause why they all returned home without making any disturbance."

To a gentleman who requested some account of what had been done in Kingswood, Mr. John Wesley wrote the following statement:—

"Few persons have lived long in the west of England who have not heard of the colliers of Kingswood, a people famous, from the beginning hitherto, for neither fearing God nor regarding man: so ignorant of the things of God, that they seemed but one remove from beasts that perish, and therefore utterly without the desire of instruction, as well as without the means of it.

"Many, last winter, used tauntingly to say of Mr. Whitefield, 'If he will convert heathens, why does not he go to the colliers of Kingswood?' In the spring he did so. And as there were thousands who resorted to no place of public worship, he went after them into their own 'wilderness, to seek and save that which was lost.' When he was called away others went into 'the highways and hedges, to compel them to come in.' And, by the grace of God, their labor was not in vain. The scene is already changed. Kingswood does not now, as a year ago, resound with cursing and blasphemy. It is no more filled with drunkenness and uncleanness, and the idle diversions that naturally lead thereto. It is no longer full of wars and fightings, of clamor and bitterness, of wrath and envyings. Peace and love are there. Great numbers of the people are mild, gentle, and easy to be entreated. They 'do not cry, neither strive;' and hardly is 'their voice heard in the streets,' or indeed in their own wood, unless when they are at their usual evening diversion, singing praise unto God their Saviour."

At this time Mr. Wesley visited Bath, where the celebrated Beau Nash, then lord of the ascendant in that city, attempted to confront the field-preacher.

"There was great expectation at Bath, of what a noted man was to do to me there: and I was much entreated 'not to preach; because no one knew what might happen.' By this report I also gained a much larger audience, among whom were many of the rich and great. I told them plainly, the Scripture had concluded them all under sin, high and low, rich and poor, one with another. Many of them seemed to be not a little surprised, and were sinking apace into seriousness, when their champion appeared, and, coming close to me, asked by what authority I did these things. I replied, By the authority of Jesus Christ, conveyed to me by the (now) archbishop of Canterbury, when he laid his hands upon me, and said, 'Take thou authority to preach the gospel.' He said, 'This is contrary to act of Parliament. This is a conventicle.' I answered, 'Sir, the conventicles mentioned in that act (as the preamble shows) are seditious meetings. But this is not such. Here is no shadow of sedition. Therefore it is not contrary to that act.' He replied, 'I say it is. And beside, your preaching frightens people out of their wits.' 'Sir, did you ever hear me preach?' 'No.' 'How then can you judge of what you never heard?' 'Sir, by common report. Common report is enough.' 'Give me leave, sir, to ask, Is not your name Nash?' 'My name is Nash.' 'Sir, I dare not judge of you by common report. I think it is not enough to judge by.' Here he paused a while, and having recovered himself, asked, 'I desire to know what this people come here for?' On which one replied, 'Sir, leave him to me. Let an old woman answer him.' 'You, Mr. Nash, take care of your body. We take care of our souls, and for the good of our souls we come here.' He replied not a word, but walked away.

"As I returned, the street was full of people, hurrying to and fro, and speaking great words. But when any of them asked, 'Which is he?' and I replied, 'I am he,' they were immediately silent. Several ladies following me into Mr. Merchant's house, the servant told me, there were some wanted to speak with me. I went to them, and said, 'I believe, ladies, the maid mistook; you only wanted to look at me.' I added, 'I do not expect that the rich and great should want either to speak with *me* or to hear *me*, for I speak the plain truth; a thing *you* hear little of, and do not desire to hear.' A few more words passed between us, and I retired."*

After visiting London, and preaching to vast multitudes in Moorfields, on Kennington Common, and other places, some of whom were strangely affected, and many effectually awakened to a sense of sin. In October, Mr. Wesley had a pressing invitation to Wales, where, although the churches were shut against him, he preached in private houses, and in the open air, often during sharp frosts, and was gladly received by the people. "I have seen," says he, "no part of England so pleasant, for sixty and seventy miles together, as those parts of Wales I have been in; and most of the inhabitants are indeed ripe for the gospel. I mean, if the expression seems strange, they are earnestly desirous of being instructed in it; and as utterly ignorant of it they are as any Creek or Cherokee Indians. I do not mean they are ignorant of the name of Christ; many of them can say both the Lord's prayer and the belief; nay, and some, all the catechism; but take them out of the road of what they have learned by rote, and they know no more (nine in ten of those with whom I conversed) either of gospel salvation, or of that faith whereby alone we are saved, than Chicali or Tomo Chachi. Now what spirit is he of who had rather these poor creatures should perish for lack of knowledge than that they should be saved, even by the exhortations of Howell Harris, or an itinerant preacher? The word did not fall to the ground. Many repented, and believed the gospel. And some joined together to strengthen each other's hands in God, and to provoke one another to love and to good works."†

About this time he stated his doctrinal views in perhaps as clear a manner, though in a summary form, as at any period subsequently:—

"A serious clergyman desired to know in what points we differed from the church of England. I answered, To the best of my knowledge, in none; the doctrines we preach are the doctrines of the church of England, indeed the fundamental doc-

* Journal. † Ibid.

trines of the church clearly laid down both in her prayers, articles, and homilies.

"He asked, 'In what points then do you differ from the other clergy of the church of England?' I answered, In none from that part of the clergy who adhere to the doctrines of the church; but from that part of the clergy who dissent from the church (though they own it not) I differ in the points following:—

"First, They speak of justification, either as the same thing with sanctification, or as something consequent upon it. I believe justification to be wholly distinct from sanctification, and necessarily antecedent to it.

"Secondly, They speak of our own holiness or good works as the cause of our justification, or that for the sake of which, on account of which, we are justified before God. I believe, neither our own holiness nor good works are any part of the cause of our justification; but that the death and righteousness of Christ are the whole and sole cause of it, or that for the sake of which, on account of which, we are justified before God.

"Thirdly, They speak of good works as a condition of justification, necessarily previous to it. I believe, no good work can be previous to justification, nor, consequently, a condition of it; but that we are justified (being till that hour ungodly, and therefore incapable of doing any good work) by faith alone; faith, without works; faith, though producing all, yet including no good works.

"Fourthly, They speak of sanctification, or holiness, as if it were an outward thing; as if it consisted chiefly, if not wholly, in these two points: 1. The doing no harm: 2. The doing good, as it is called; that is, the using the means of grace, and helping our neighbor.

"I believe it to be an inward thing, namely, 'the life of God in the soul of man; a participation of the divine nature; the mind that was in Christ;' or, 'the renewal of our heart after the image of Him that created us.'

"Lastly, They speak of the new birth as an outward thing; as if it were no more than baptism, or, at most, a change from outward wickedness to outward goodness, from a vicious to what is called a virtuous life. I believe it to be an inward thing; a change from inward wickedness to inward goodness; an entire change of our inmost nature from the image of the devil, wherein we are born, to the image of God; a change from the love of the creature to the love of the Creator, from earthly and sensual to heavenly and holy affections; in a word, a change from the tempers of the spirits of darkness to those of the angels of God in heaven.

"There is therefore a wide, essential, fundamental, irreconcilable difference between us: so that if they speak the truth as it is in Jesus, I am found a false witness before God. But if I teach the way of God in truth, they are blind leaders of the blind."*

Disputes having arisen between the Methodists and Moravians, who still formed one society at Fetter-Lane, Mr. Wesley returned to London. Over this society he professed to have no authority, and, as it appeared, had but little influence. Various new doctrines of a mystical kind, which he thought dangerous, had been introduced by several of the teachers; and it seems he foresaw a separation from them to be inevitable, for he had taken a place near Moorfields, which had been used as a foundry for casting cannon; and on this visit he preached in it to very numerous congregations. He was on this and other visits to London unsuccessful in settling the disputes which had arisen in the society; and in June, 1740, he again came to London, and spent upwards of a month among them, occupied at intervals in the same attempt. His efforts being fruitless, he read to them the following paper:—

"About nine months ago, certain of you began to speak contrary to the doctrine we had till then received. The sum of what you asserted is this: 1. That there is no such thing as weak faith: that there is no justifying faith, where there is ever any doubt or fear; or where there is not, in the full sense, a new, a clean heart. 2. That a man ought not to use those ordinances of God, which our church terms means of grace, before he has such a faith as excludes all doubt and fear, and implies a new, a clean heart. 3. You have often affirmed, that to search the Scriptures, to pray, or to communicate, before we have this faith, is to seek salvation by works; and till these works are laid aside, no man can receive faith.

"I believe these assertions to be flatly contrary to the word of God. I have warned you hereof again and again, and besought you to turn back to the law and to the testimony. I have borne with you long, hoping you would turn. But as I find you more and more confirmed in the error of your ways, nothing now remains but that I should give you up to God. You that are of the same judgment, follow me."—"I then," adds Mr. Wesley, "without saying any thing more, withdrew, as did eighteen or nineteen of the society."

Those who continued to adhere to him then met at the foundry, the whole number amounting to about seventy-two. The Moravian teacher Molther appears to have been the chief author of the novel opinions objected to by Mr. Wesley, whom however Peter Bohler thought Mr. Wesley misunderstood; which was not likely, as Mr. Charles Wesley mentions the same things in his journal. Towards the Moravian church at large, Mr. Wesley continued to feel an unabated affection; but as he was never a member of that church, and maintained only a kind of co-fraternity with those of them who were in London, when these became infected with novel opinions, his departure from them, with such as were of the same mind as himself, and were also members of the church of England, was a step of prudence and of peace. From a conversation which he had with Count Zinzendorf a short time afterwards, and which he has published, it would seem that a refined species of Antinomianism had crept in amongst the Moravians; and that the count was at that time by no means a teacher of the class of Peter Bohler. But, to affirm with Zinzendorf that there is nothing but imputed righteousness, and to reject inherent righteousness; to insist upon all our perfection being *in* Christ, and to deny the Christian perfection or maturity which believers derive *from* Him—was not in accordance with the Moravian church, appears from the following extract from the authorized exposition of their doctrines by Spangenberg, which, as the perversions of these "wrong-headed men" have been mentioned, it would be unjust to the body of Moravians to withhold:—

"Although this faith, which is so peculiar to all the children of God, that whoever has it not is no child of God, does no outward wonders and signs, raises none from the dead, removes no mountains, yet it does and performs other things, which are of much greater importance. What are those things? Answer: We through faith attain to the enjoyment of that which Christ hath by his sacrifice purchased for us. We are, (1.) Through faith in Jesus Christ made free from the dominion of sin. Paul says, 'Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace,' Rom. vi. 14.

"All those who believe in Jesus Christ are freed

* Journal.

from the curse and condemnation of the law; they obtain forgiveness of sins, become the adopted children of God, and are sealed with the Holy Ghost. These are they, then, who are made free from the dominion of sin, because they are under grace. Now when they are thus exhorted, 'Let not sin reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof; neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin,' &c. Rom. vi. 12, 13; they cannot say, O that is impossible for us; we are but sinful men: the flesh is weak, and the like. For they have Jesus Christ, who saveth his people from their sins; they have a Father in heaven, who heareth their prayer and supplication. The Holy Ghost dwells in their hearts, and strengthens them in all that is good. If they therefore do but rightly make use of the grace wherein through faith they stand, then sin can have no dominion over them. This is exactly what John says, 1 epist. iii. 9, 'Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin,' (he doth not let sin reign, or have dominion in his mortal body, that he should obey it in the lusts thereof,) 'for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.' That is, his heart will comply with no such thing; for he loves our Saviour, being a child of God, and a partaker of the Holy Ghost."*

Not only Antinomian errors, but mystic notions of ceasing from ordinances, and waiting for faith in *stillness*, greatly prevailed also among the Moravians in London, at this time, and were afterwards carried by them into many of the country Methodist societies in Yorkshire, Derbyshire, and other places. Of the effect at Nottingham, Mr. Wesley gives a curious account in his Journal for June, 1743:—

"In the afternoon we went on to Nottingham, where Mr. Howe received us gladly. At eight the society met, as usual. I could not but observe, 1. That the room was not half full, which used, until very lately, to be crowded within and without. 2. That not one person who came in used any prayer at all; but every one immediately sat down, and began either talking to his neighbor, or looking about to see who was there. 3. That when I began to pray, there appeared a general surprise, no one offering to kneel down, and those who stood, choosing the most easy, indolent posture which they conveniently could. I afterwards looked for one of our hymn books upon the desk, (for I knew Mr. Howe had brought one from London,) but both that and the Bible were vanished away. And in the room lay the Moravian hymns, and the Count's sermons."†

That incautious book, Luther on the Galatians, appears to have been the source of the Antinomianism of the Moravians; and their quietism they learned from Madame Guion, and other French mystic writers.

The Methodist society, as that name distinguishes the people who to this day acknowledge Mr. Wesley as their founder under God, was, properly speaking, as a society specially under his pastoral charge, collected in this year, (1740,) at the chapel in Moorfields, where he regularly preached, and where by the blessing of God, upon his and Mr. Charles Wesley's labors, the society rapidly increased. For this, and for the societies in Bristol, Kingswood, and other parts, he, in 1743, drew up a set of rules, which continue in force to the present time, and the observance of which was then, and continues to be, the condition of membership. They are so well known as to render it unnecessary to quote them. It may only be observed, that they enjoin no peculiar opinions, and relate entirely to moral conduct, to charitable offices, and to the observance of the ordinances of God. Churchmen or dissenters, walking by these rules, might become and remain members of these societies, provided they held their doctrinal views and disciplinary prepossessions in peace and charity. The sole object of the union was to assist the members to "make their calling and election sure," by cultivating the religion of the heart, and a holy conformity to the laws of Christ. These rules bear the signature of John and Charles Wesley.

Mr. Wesley's mother about this time began to attend his ministry. She had been somewhat prejudiced against her sons by reports of their "errors" and "extravagancies;" but was convinced, upon hearing them, that they spoke "according to the oracles of God." There is an interesting entry in Mr. Wesley's journal respecting this venerable woman:—

"September 3, I talked largely with my mother, who, told me, that, till a short time since, she had scarce heard such a thing mentioned as the having forgiveness of sins now, or God's Spirit bearing witness with our spirit. Much less did she imagine, that this was the common privilege of all true believers. 'Therefore,' said she, 'I never durst ask for it myself. But two or three weeks ago, while my son Hall was pronouncing those words, in delivering the cup to me, *The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ which was given for thee*; the words struck through my heart, and I knew God for Christ's sake had forgiven me all my sins.'

"I asked, whether her father (Dr. Annesley) had not the same faith; and whether she had not heard him preach it to others. She answered, 'He had it himself, and declared a little before his death, that for more than forty years, he had no darkness, no fear, no doubt at all of his being *accepted in the Beloved*.' But that, nevertheless, she did not remember to have heard him preach, no, not once, explicitly upon it: whence she supposed he also looked upon it as the peculiar blessing of a few, not as promised to all the people of God."*

The extraordinary manner in which some persons were frequently affected under Mr. Wesley's preaching, as well as that of his coadjutors, now created much discussion, and to many gave great offence. Some were seized with trembling; others sunk down and uttered loud and piercing cries; others fell into a kind of agony. In some instances whilst prayer was offered for them, they rose up with a sudden change of feeling, testifying that they had "redemption through the blood of Christ, even the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." Mr. Samuel Wesley, who denied the knowledge of the forgiveness of sins, treated these things, in a correspondence with his brother, alternately with sarcasm and serious severity, and particularly attacked the doctrine of assurance. In this controversy, Mr. John Wesley attaches no weight whatever to these outward agitations; but contends that he is bound to believe the profession made by many, who had been so affected, of an inward change, because that had been confirmed by their subsequent conduct and spirit. On the subject of assurance, the disputants put forth their logical acuteness; but the result appears to have been upon the whole instructive to the elder brother: whose letters soften considerably towards the close of the dispute. Mr. Samuel Wesley died in the following November. The circumstances to which he objected, although he knew them only by report, and was too far removed from the scene to be an accurate judge, have since that time furnished ample subject for serious or satirical animadversion to many

* Exposition, pp. 215, 216.

† Journal.

* Journal.

writers, and to none more than to Dr. Southey.* A few general remarks upon this point may not therefore be here out of place. By this writer it is affirmed, that great importance was attached by Mr. Wesley to those emotions, and bodily affections, which occasionally occurred; and that the most visionary persons, and those who pretended ecstacies, dreams, &c. were, at least in the early part of his ministry, the objects of his special respect, as eminently holy and favored. This is so far from the fact, that it is difficult to meet with a divine whose views of religion are more practical and definite. He did not deny that occasionally "God," even now, "speaketh in a dream, in a vision of the night," and that he may thus "open the ears of men to instruction, and command them to depart from iniquity;" he believed that, in point of fact, many indisputable cases of this kind have occurred in modern times; and in this belief he agreed with many of the wisest and best of men. He has recorded some cases of what may be called ecstacy, generally without an opinion of his own, leaving every one to form his own judgment from the recorded fact. He unquestionably believed in special effusions of the influence of the Holy Spirit upon congregations and individuals, producing powerful emotions of mind, expressed in some instances by bodily affections; and he has furnished some facts on which Dr. Southey has exercised his philosophy, with a success, probably, more satisfactory to himself, than convincing to his readers. But that any thing extraordinary, either of bodily or mental affection, was with Mr. Wesley, at any time of his life, of itself, deemed so important as to be regarded as a mark of superior piety, is a most unfounded assumption. Those of his sermons which contain the doctrines which he deemed essential; his notes on the New Testament; and the rules by which every member of his societies was required to be governed, are sufficiently in refutation of this notion. In them no reference is made to any thing visionary as a part, however small, of true religion; unless, indeed, all spiritual religion, changing the heart, and sanctifying the affections, be thought visionary. The rule of admission into his societies was "a desire to fly from the wrath to come," but then the sincerity of this was to be evidenced by corresponding "fruits" in the conduct; and on this condition only, further explained by detailed regulations, all of them simple and practical, were the members to remain in connection with him. These rules are the standing evidence, that, from the first formation of the Methodist societies, neither a speculative nor a visionary scheme of religion was the basis of their union. Had Mr. Wesley placed religion, in the least, in those circumstances, he would have set up a very different standard of doctrine in his sermons; and the rules of his societies would have borne an equivocal and mystic character.

That cases of real enthusiasm occurred at this and subsequent periods is indeed allowed. There are always nervous, dreamy, and excitable people to be found; and the emotion which was produced among those who were really so "pricked in the heart," as to cry with a sincerity equal to that which was felt by those of old, "What shall we do to be saved?" would often be communicated to such persons by natural sympathy. No one could be blamed for this, unless he had encouraged the excitement for its own sake, or taught the people to regard it as a sign of grace, which most assuredly Mr. Wesley never did. Nor is it correct to represent these effects, genuine and factitious together, as peculiar to Methodism. A great impression was made by the preaching of the Wesleys and Mr. Whitefield, in almost all places where they went. Thousands in the course of a few years, and of those too who had lived in the greatest unconcern as to spiritual things, and were most ignorant and depraved in their habits, were recovered from their vices, and the moral appearance of whole neighborhoods was changed. Yet the effects were not without precedent even in those circumstances in which they have been thought most singular and exceptionable. Great and rapid results of this kind were produced in the first ages of Christianity, but not without "outcries," and strong corporeal as well as mental emotions, nay, and extravagancies too. By perversion, even condemnable heresies arose, and a rank and real enthusiasm: but will any man from this argue against Christianity itself; or asperse the labors and characters of those holy men who planted its genuine root in Asia, Africa, and Europe? Will he say, that as, through the corrupt nature of men, evil often accompanies good, one is to be confounded with the other, and that those great evangelists were the authors of the evil because they were the instruments of the benefit? Even in the decline of true piety in the church of Christ, there were not wanting holy and zealous ministers to carry out the tidings of salvation, to the barbarous ancestors of European nations; and strong and effectual impressions were made by their faithful and powerful preaching, upon the savage multitudes who surrounded them, accompanied with many effects similar to those which attended the preaching of the Wesleys and Whitefield; but all who went on these sacred missions were not enthusiasts; nor were all the conversions effected by them a mere exchange of superstitions. Such objectors might have known that like effects often accompanied the preaching of eminent men at the reformation, and that many of the Puritan and Non-conformist ministers had similar successes in large districts in our own country. They might have known that, in Scotland, and also among the grave Presbyterians of New England, previous to the rise of Methodism, such impressions had not unfrequently been produced by the ministry of faithful men, extended by very similar circumstances; and they might have been informed that, though on a smaller scale, the same results have followed the ministry of modern missionaries of different religious societies in various parts of the world. It may be laid down as a principle established by fact, that, whenever a zealous and faithful ministry is raised up, after a long spiritual death, the early effects of that ministry are not only powerful, but often attended with extraordinary circumstances; nor are such extraordinary circumstances necessarily extravagancies because they are not common. If there be an explicit truth in Scripture, it is, that the success of the ministry of the gospel, in the conversion of men, is the consequence of divine influence; and if there be a well ascertained fact in ecclesiastical story, it is, that no great and indisputable results of this kind have been produced, but by men who have *acknowledged* this truth, and have gone forth in humble dependence upon that promised co-operation contained in the words, "And lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world." This fact, equally striking and notorious, is a strong confirmation that the sense of the sacred oracles on this point, was not mistaken by them. The testimony of the word of God is, that, as to ministerial success, "God giveth the increase:" the testimony of experience is, that no success in producing true conversion, has ever taken place in any church, but when this co-operation of God has been acknowledged and sought by the agents employed in it.

The doctrine of divine influence, as necessary to the conversion of men, being thus grounded on

* Life of Wesley.

the evidence of Scripture, and further confirmed by fact, it may follow, and that in perfect conformity with revelation, that such influence may be dispensed in different degrees at different periods. That it was more eminently exerted at the first establishment of Christianity, than at some other periods, is certain; and that not only in extraordinary gifts, (for though these might awaken attention and silence unbelief, we have the evidence of Scripture history to prove, that miracles cannot of themselves convert men from vice,) but in sanctifying energy, without which the heart is never brought to yield to the authority and will of God in its choice and affections. That in various subsequent periods, there have been special dispensations of favor to nations, with reference to the improvement of their moral state, is clear from a fact which cannot be denied, that eminently holy and gifted men have been raised up at such periods, for the benefit of the countries and the age in which they appeared, from whose exertions they have derived the highest moral advantages. For the reasons we have given, we cannot refer the appearance of such men to chance, nor the formation of their characters to the circumstances and spirit of "stirring times." We leave these conclusions to the philosophy of the world; and recognize in the appearance of such instruments, the merciful designs and special grace of Him "who worketh all and in all." But the argument is, that if such men have really been the instruments of "turning many to righteousness," and that if the principles of our religion forbid us to believe that this can be done by any gifts or qualities in them, however lofty; then, according to the Scripture doctrine, they were "workers together with God," and the age in which they labored was distinguished by a larger effusion of the Holy Spirit upon the minds of men. Why this should occur at one time more eminently than at another, we pretend not to say; but even this notion, so enthusiastic probably to many, is still in conformity to the word of God, which declares that "the wind bloweth where it listeth," and that the influence of the Holy Spirit, like the atmosphere, is subject to laws not ascertainable by man; and if this effusion of his influence argue especial, though undeserved favor to particular nations and ages, this is not more difficult to account for than that, at some periods and places, men of eminent usefulness should be sent into the world, when they do not appear in others, which being a mere matter of fact, leaves no room for cavil. This view, likewise, accords with what the Scriptures teach us to expect as to the future. For the accomplishment of the sublime consummation of the divine counsels, agents of great efficiency and qualifications, we believe, will from time to time appear; but our hope does not rest on them, but on Him only who has explicitly promised to "pour out his Spirit upon all flesh," at once to give efficiency to instruments in themselves feeble, however gifted, and so "to order the unruly wills and passions of men," that they may be subdued and sanctified by the truth. If such effusions of divine influence be looked for, and on such principles, as the means of spreading the power of Christianity generally, we may surely believe it quite accordant both with the spirit and letter of Scripture, that the same influence should often be exerted to preserve and to revive religion; and that if nations, already Christian, are to be the instruments of extending Christianity, not in name only, but in its spirit and sanctity into all the earth, they should be prepared for this high designation by the special exercise of the same agency turning them from what is merely formal in religion to its realities, and making them examples to others, of the purifying grace of the gospel of God our Saviour. Let it then be supposed, (no great presumption indeed,) that Christians have quite as good a foundation for these opinions, as others can boast for that paltry philosophy, by which they would explain the effects produced by the preaching of holy and zealous ministers in different ages; and we may conclude that such effects, as far as they are genuine, are the result of divine influence; and, when numerous and rapid, of a divine influence specially and eminently exerted, giving more than ordinary assistance to the minds of men in their religious concerns, and rendering the obstinate more inexcusable by louder and more explicit calls. Of the extraordinary circumstances which have usually accompanied such visitations, it may be said, that if some should be resolved into purely natural causes, some into real enthusiasm, and (under favor of our philosophers) others into satanic imitation, a sufficient number will remain, which can only be explained by considering them as results of a strong impression made upon the consciences and affections of men, by an influence ascertained to be divine, though usually exerted through human instrumentality, by its unquestionable effects upon the heart and life. Nor is it either irrational or unscriptural to suppose, that times of great national darkness and depravity, the case certainly of this country at the outset of Mr. Wesley and his colleagues in their glorious career, should require a strong remedy; and that the attention of a sleeping people, should be roused by circumstances which could not fail to be noticed by the most unthinking. We do not attach primary importance to secondary circumstances; but they are not to be wholly disregarded. The Lord was not in the wind, nor in the earthquake, nor in the fire, but in the "still small voice;" yet that "still small voice" might not have been heard, except by minds roused from their inattention by the shaking of the earth, and the sounding of the storm.

If, however, no special and peculiar effusion of divine influence on the minds of many of Mr. Wesley's hearers be supposed; if we only assume the exertion of that ordinary influence which, as we have seen, must accompany the labors of every minister of Christ to render them successful in serving men, the strong emotions often produced by the preaching of the founder of Methodism might be accounted for on principles very different from those adopted by many objectors. The multitudes to whom he preached were generally grossly ignorant of the gospel; and he poured upon their minds a flood of light; his discourses were plain, pointed, earnest, and affectionate; the feeling produced was deep, piercing, and in numberless cases such as we have no right, if we believe the Bible, to attribute to any other cause than that inward operation of God with his truth which alone can render human means effectual. Many of those on whom such impressions were made retired in silence, and nurtured them by reflection. The "stricken deer" hastened into solitude, there to bleed, unobserved by all but God. This was the case with the majority; for visible and strong emotions were the occasional, and not the constant results. At some seasons, indeed, effects were produced, which, on Christian principles, we may hesitate not to say, can only be accounted for on the assumption that the influence was both divine and special; at others, the impression was great, but yet we need assume nothing more than the ordinary blessing of God which accompanies "the word of his grace," when delivered in the fulness of faith and love, in order to account for it But beside those who were silently pierced, and whose minds were sufficiently strong to command their emotions, there were often many of a class not accustomed to put such restraints upon themselves.

To a powerful feeling they offered but a slight resistance, and it became visible. To many people, then, as now, this would appear extravagant; but on what principle can the genuineness of the impression be questioned? Only if no subsequent fruit appeared. For if a true conversion followed, then, if there be truth in religion itself, the "finger of God" must be acknowledged.

We have hitherto seen Mr. Wesley and Mr. Whitefield laboring together in harmony, and uniting in a common design to promote the revival of scriptural Christianity through the land. But Mr. Wesley, about this time, being impressed with the strong tendency of the Calvinistic doctrines to produce Antinomianism, published a sermon against absolute predestination, at which Mr. Whitefield, who sometime previously had embraced that notion, took offence. A controversy between them, embracing some other points, ensued, which issued in a temporary estrangement; and they labored from this time independently of each other; their societies in London, Kingswood, and other places, being kept quite separate.

A reconciliation however took place between Mr. Wesley and Mr. Whitefield in January, 1750, so that they preached in each other's chapels. The following entry on this subject appears in his Journal:—"Friday, 19th. In the evening I read prayers at the chapel in West street, and Mr. Whitefield preached a plain, affectionate discourse. Sunday, 21. He read prayers, and I preached. Sunday, 28. I read prayers, and Mr. Whitefield preached. How wise is God, in giving different talents to different preachers! So by the blessing of God, one more stumbling block is removed."

The following extract from Mr. Whitefield's will is a pleasing instance of generous, truly Christian feeling:—"I leave a mourning ring to my honored and dear friends, and disinterested fellow-laborers, the Rev. Messrs. John and Charles Wesley, in token of my indissoluble union with them in heart and Christian affection, notwithstanding our difference in judgment about some particular points of doctrine."*

Mr. Wesley, at Mr. Whitefield's own desire, preached his funeral sermon at the Tabernacle, Moorfields.

Several preachers were now employed by Mr. Wesley to assist in the growing work, which already had swelled beyond even his and his brother's active powers suitably to supply with the ministration of the word of God. Mr. Charles Wesley had discouraged this from the beginning, and even he himself hesitated; but, with John, the promotion of religion was the first concern, and church order the second, although inferior in consideration to that only. With Charles these views were often reversed. Mr. Wesley, in the year 1741, had to caution his brother against joining the Moravians, after the example of Mr. Gambold, to which he was at that time inclined; and adds, "I am not clear, that brother Maxfield should not expound at Grey-hound Lane; nor can I as yet do without him. Our clergymen have increased full as much as the preachers." Mr. Maxfield's preaching had the strong sanction of the countess of Huntingdon; but so little of design, with reference to the forming of a sect, had Mr. Wesley, in the employment of Mr. Maxfield, that, in his own absence from London, he had only authorized him to pray with the society, and to advise them as might be needful; and upon his beginning to preach, he hastened back to silence him. On this his mother addressed him, "John, you know what my sentiments have been. You cannot suspect me of favoring readily any thing of this kind. But take care what you do with respect to that young man, for he is as surely called of God to preach, as you are. Examine what have been the fruits of his preaching, and hear him also yourself." He took this advice, and could not venture to forbid him.

His defence of himself on this point we may pronounce irrefutable, and turns upon the disappointment of his hopes, that the parochial clergy would take the charge of those who in different places had been turned to God by his ministry, and that of his fellow-laborers.

"It pleased God," says Mr. Wesley, "by two or three ministers of the church of England, to call many sinners to repentance, who, in several parts, were undeniably turned from a course of sin to a course of holiness.

"The ministers of the places where this was done ought to have received those ministers with open arms; and to have taken those persons who had just begun to serve God, into their particular care; watching over them in tender love, lest they should fall back into the snares of the devil.

"Instead of this, the greater part spoke of those ministers, as if the devil, not God, had sent them. Some repelled them from the Lord's table; others stirred up the people against them, representing them even in their public discourses, as fellows not fit to live; papists, heretics, traitors; conspirators against their king and country.

"And how did they watch over the sinners lately reformed? Even as a leopard watcheth over his prey. They drove some of them from the Lord's table; to which, till now, they had no desire to approach. They preached all manner of evil concerning them, openly cursing them in the name of the Lord. They turned many out of their work, persuaded others to do so too, and harassed them in all manner of ways.

"The event was, that some were wearied out, and so turned back to the vomit again: and then these good pastors gloried over them, and endeavored to shake others by their example.

"When the ministers, by whom God had helped them before, came again to those places, great part of their work was to begin again, if it could be begun again; but the relapsers were often so hardened in sin, that no impression could be made upon them.

"What could they do in a case of so extreme necessity, where so many souls lay at stake?

"No clergyman would assist at all. The expedient that remained was, to find some one among themselves who was upright of heart, and of sound judgment in the things of God; and to desire him to meet the rest as often as he could, in order to confirm them, as he was able, in the ways of God, either by reading to them, or by prayer, or by exhortation."

This statement may indeed be considered as affording the key to all that which, with respect to church order, may be called irregularity in Mr. Wesley's future proceedings. God had given him large fruits of his ministry in various places; when he was absent from them, the people were "as sheep having no shepherd," or were rather persecuted by their natural pastors, the clergy; he was reduced, therefore, to the necessity of leaving them without religious care, or of providing it for them. He wisely chose the latter; but, true to his own principles, and even prejudices, he carried this no farther than the necessity of the case: the hours of service were in no instance to interfere with those of the establishment, and at the parish church the members were exhorted to communicate. Thus a religious society was raised up within the national church, and with this anomaly, that as to all its interior arrangements, as a society, it was independ-

* Journal.

ent of its ecclesiastical authority. The irregularity was, in *principle*, as great when the first step was taken as at any future time. It was a form of practical and partial separation, though not of theoretical dissent; but it arose out of a moral necessity, and existed for some years in such a state, that, had the clergy been disposed to co-operate in this evident revival and spread of true religion, and had the heads of the church been willing to sanction itinerant labors among its ministers, and private religious meetings among the serious part of the people for mutual edification, the great body of Methodists might have been retained in communion with the church of England

On this matter, which was often brought before the leading and influential clergy, they made their own election. They refused to co-operate; they doubtless thought that they acted right; and, excepting the obloquy and persecution with which they followed an innocent and pious people, they perhaps did so; for a great innovation would have been made upon the discipline of the church, for which, at that time at least, it was little prepared. But the clergy, having made their election, have no right, as some of them continue to do, to censure either the founders of Methodism or their people for making more ample provision for their spiritual wants. It was imperative upon the former to provide that pastoral care for the souls brought to God by their labors, which the church could not or would not afford; and the people had a Christian liberty to follow that course which they seriously believed most conducive to their own edification, as well as a liberty by the very laws of their country. The violent clerical writers against Methodism have usually forgotten, that no man in England is bound to the national church by any thing but moral influence; and that from every other tie he is set free by the laws which recognise and protect religious liberty. Mr. Wesley resisted all attempts at formal separation, still hoping that a more friendly spirit would spring up among the clergy; and he even pressed hard upon the consciences of his people to effect their uniform and constant attendance at their parish churches, and at the sacrament; but he could not long and generally succeed. Where the clergyman of a parish was moral or pious there was no difficulty; but cases of conscience were continually arising among his societies, as to the lawfulness of attending the ministry of the irreligious and profane clergymen, who were then and long afterward found throughout the land; and as to hearing, and training up children to hear, false and misleading doctrines, Pelagian, Antinomian, or such as were directed in some form against the religion of the heart as taught in the Scriptures, and in the services of the national church. These cases exceedingly perplexed Mr. Wesley; and though he relaxed his strictness in some instances, yet as he did not sufficiently yield to meet the whole case, and perhaps could not do it without adopting such an ecclesiastical organization of his societies as would have contradicted the principles to which, as to their relation to the church, he had, perhaps, overhastily and peremptorily committed himself; the effect was, that long before his death, the attendance of the Methodists at such parish churches as had not pious ministers was exceedingly scanty; and as they were not permitted public worship among themselves in the hours of church service, a great part of the Sabbath was lost to them, except as they employed it in family and private exercises. So also as to the Lord's supper; as it was not then administered by their own preachers, it fell into great and painful neglect. To meet the case in part, the two brothers, and a few clergymen who joined them, had public service in church hours, in the chapels in London and some other places, and administered the Lord's supper to numerous communicants; a measure, which, like other inconsistencies of a similar kind, grew out of a sense of duty, warring with, and restrained by, strong prepossessions, and the very sincere but very unfounded hope just mentioned, that a more friendly spirit would be awakened among the clergy, and that all the sheep gathered out of the wilderness would at length be kindly welcomed into the national fold. As ecclesiastical irregularities, these measures stood, however, precisely on the same principle as those subsequent changes which have rendered the body of Methodists still more distinct and separate; a subject to which reference will again be made. The warmest advocates of church Methodism among ourselves were never consistent churchmen; and the church writers, who have set up the example of Mr. Wesley against his more modern followers, have been wholly ignorant or unmindful of his history. Dr. Southey, and others who have fancied a *plan* of separation in Mr. Wesley's mind from the beginning, though followed cautiously and with policy "step by step," have shown a better acquaintance with the *facts* of the progress of Methodism; though they have been most unjust to the pure and undesigning mind of its founder; who walked "step by step," it is true, but only as Providence by an arrangement of circumstances seemed to lead the way; and would make no change but as a necessity arising from conscientious views of the prosperity of a spiritual work, appeared to dictate. Had he looked forward to the forming of a distinct sect, as an *honor*, he would have attempted to enjoy it in its fulness during his life, and had he been so skilful a *designer* as some have represented him, he would not have left a large body unprovided for, in many respects essential to its prosperity and permanence, at his death. He left his work unfinished, and he knew that he should leave it in that state; but he threw the final results, in the spirit of a strong faith, upon the care of Him whose hand he had seen in it from the beginning.

CHAPTER VII.

We have now to follow these apostolic men into still more extended fields of labor, and to contests more formidable. They had sustained many attacks from the press; and some frowns from the authorities of the church. By mobs they had occasionally been insulted both in England and Wales. But in London, some riotous proceedings of a somewhat violent character, now occurred at their places of worship. With respect to these, the following anecdote is curious, as it shows that Mr. Wesley's zeal was regarded with favor in a high quarter: "On the last day of 1742, Sir John Ganson called upon Mr. Wesley, and said, 'Sir, you have no need to suffer these riotous mobs to molest you, as they have done long. I and all the other Middlesex magistrates have orders from above to do you justice whenever you apply to us.' Two or three weeks after, they did apply. Justice was done, though not with rigor; and from that time the Methodists had peace in London."*

In the discipline of Methodism, the division of the society into classes is an important branch. Each class is placed under a person of experience and piety, who meets the others once a-week, for prayers, and inquiry into the religious state of each, in order to administer exhortation and counsel. The origin of these classes was, however, purely accidental. The chapel at Bristol was in debt;

* Whitehead's Life.

and it was agreed that each member of the society should contribute one penny a-week to reduce the burden. The Bristol society was therefore divided into classes; and for convenience, one person was appointed to collect the weekly subscriptions from each class, and to pay the amount to the stewards. The advantage of this system, when turned to a higher purpose, at once struck the methodical and practical mind of Mr. Wesley: he therefore invited several "earnest and sensible men" to meet him; and the society in London was divided into classes like that of Bristol, and placed under the spiritual care of these tried and experienced persons. At first they visited each person, at his own residence, once a-week; but the preferable mode of bringing each class together weekly was at length adopted. These meetings were not, as some have supposed, inquisitorial; but their business is confined to statements of religious experience, and the administration of friendly and pious counsel. Mutual acquaintance with each other is thus formed; the leader is the friend and adviser of all; and among the members, by their praying so often with and for each other, the true "fellowship of saints" is promoted. Opportunities are also thus afforded for ascertaining the wants of the poorer members, and obtaining relief for them; and for visiting the sick; the duty of a leader being to see his members once in the week, either at the meeting, or, if absent from that, at home. Upon this institution Mr. Wesley remarks, "Upon reflection, I could not but observe, this is the very thing which was from the beginning of Christianity. In the earliest times, those whom God had sent forth 'preached the gospel to every creature.' The body of *hearers* were mostly either Jews or heathens. But as soon as any of these were so convinced of the truth as to forsake sin, and seek the gospel of salvation, they immediately joined them together, took an account of their names, advised them to watch over each other, and met these κατηχημενοι, *catechumens*, as they were then called, apart from the great congregation, that they might instruct, rebuke, exhort, and pray with them, and for them, according to their several necessities."*

A current charge against Mr. Wesley, about this time, was, that he was a papist; and from the frequent references to it in his journal, although it was treated by him with characteristic sprightliness, it appears to have been the occasion of much popular odium, arising from the fears entertained by the nation of the movements of the Pretender. In his Journal, March, 1741, he says, "Calling on a person near Grosvenor Square, I found there was but too much reason here for crying out of the increase of popery; many converts to it being continually made by the gentleman who preaches in Swallow-street three days in every week. Now, why do not the champions, who are continually crying out, 'popery, popery,' in Moorfields, come hither, that they may not always be fighting 'as one that beateth the air?' Plainly because they have no mind to fight at all, but to show their valor without an opponent. And they well know, they may defy popery at the Foundry without any danger of contradiction." And some time afterward, he remained in London, from whence all papists had been ordered by proclamation to depart, a week longer than he intended, that he might not seem to plead guilty to the charge. The notion that the Methodists were papists was also, in those times, the occasion of their being persecuted in several places in the country.

Mr. Wesley now extended his labors northward. He first accepted an invitation into Leicestershire, and has the following amusing anecdote in his Journal: "I stopped a little at Newport-Pagnell, and then rode on till I overtook a serious man, with whom I immediately fell into conversation. He presently gave me to know what his opinions were; therefore I said nothing to contradict them. But that did not content him; he was quite uneasy to know whether I held the doctrine of the decrees as he did. But I told him over and over, we had better keep to practical things, lest we should be angry at one another; and so we did for two miles, till he caught me unawares, and dragged me into the dispute before I knew where I was. He then grew warmer and warmer;—told me I was rotten at heart, and supposed I was one of John Wesley's followers. I told him, 'No! I am John Wesley himself!' Upon which he appeared,

Improvisum aspris velut qui sentibus anguem
Pressit——

'as one who had unawares trodden on a snake,' and would gladly have run away outright. But being the better mounted of the two, I kept close to his side, and endeavored to show him his heart till we came into the street of Northampton." In this journey he visited Yorkshire. At Bristol and the neighborhood many persons had been awakened to a serious concern by the conversation and preaching of honest John Nelson, who had himself been brought to the knowledge of God in London, by attending the service at the Foundry, and had returned to his friends in Yorkshire, chiefly moved by a strong desire to promote their salvation. The natural genius of this excellent man, who afterwards suffered much persecution, and was barbarously treated by the magistrates and clergy, was admirably acute, and gave to his repartees a surprising power and convincingness. He greatly excelled in conversation on religious subjects; and his journal is one of the most interesting pieces of biography published among the Methodists. When Mr. Wesley reached Birstal, he found that he had been the instrument of very extensive good, so that the moral aspect of the town had been changed. After preaching to a large congregation on Birstal Hill, and on the side of Dewsbury Moor, and encouraging Mr. Nelson in his endeavors to do good, Mr. Wesley proceeded to Newcastle-upon-Tyne, hoping to have the same fruit of his labors among the colliers of that district as he had seen among those of Kingswood. So true was this lover of the souls of men to his own advice to his preachers, "Go not only to those who need you, but to those who need you most."

On walking through the town, after he had taken some refreshment, he observes, "I was surprised; so much drunkenness, cursing and swearing, even from the mouths of little children, do I never remember to have seen and heard before in so short a time." Sunday, May 30th, at seven in the morning he walked down to Sandgate, the poorest and most contemptible part of the town, and standing at the end of the street with John Taylor, began to sing the hundredth psalm. "Three or four people," says he, "came out to see what was the matter, who soon increased to four or five hundred. I suppose there might be twelve or fifteen hundred before I had done preaching, to whom I applied these solemn words, 'He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed.'"

In returning southward, he preached in various parts of Yorkshire; and visiting Epworth, where a small society of Methodists had been collected, and finding the use of the church denied him, he stood upon his father's tomb, and preached to a numerous congregation, who, as well as himself, appear to have been deeply impressed with the circumstance

* Journal.

of the son speaking to them, as from the ashes of his father, on those solemn subjects on which that venerable parish priest had faithfully addressed them for so many years. This was Sunday, June 6th, 1742, and on the Wednesday following, he humorously relates, "I rode over to a neighboring town, to wait upon a justice of peace, a man of candor and understanding; before whom, I was informed, their angry neighbors had carried a whole wagon load of these new heretics. But when he asked what they had done, there was a deep silence; for that was a point their conductors had forgot. At length one said, 'Why, they pretend to be better than other people; and, besides, they pray from morning till night.'—Mr. S— asked, 'But have they done nothing besides?' 'Yes, Sir,' said an old man, 'An't please your worship, they have *convarted* my wife. Till she went among them, she had such a tongue; and now she is as quiet as a lamb.' 'Carry them back, carry them back,' replied the justice, and let them convert all the scolds in the town.'" *

On the Sunday following he also preached at Epworth, and remarks, "At six I preached for the last time in Epworth churchyard (being to leave town the next morning) to a vast multitude gathered together from all parts, on the beginning of our Lord's sermon on the mount. I continued among them for near three hours; and yet we scarce knew how to part. O let none think his labor of love is lost, because the fruit does not immediately appear. Near forty years did my father labor here; but he saw little fruit of all his labor. I took some pains among this people too; and my strength also seemed to be spent in vain. But now the fruit appeared. There were scarce any in the town, on whom either my father or I had taken any pains formerly, but the seed sown so long since now sprung up, bringing forth repentance and remission of sins." †

The following remarks on a sermon he heard at Painswick, occur in his Journal about this time, and deserve notice:—"I went to church at ten, and heard a remarkable discourse, asserting, 'that we are justified by faith alone; but that this faith, which is the previous condition of justification, is the complex of all Christian virtues, including all holiness and good works in the very idea of it.'

"Alas! How little is the difference between asserting, either, 1. That we are justified by works, which is popery bare-faced; (and indeed so gross that the sober papists, those of the council of Trent in particular, are ashamed of it;) or, 2. That we are justified by faith and works, which is popery refined or veiled: (but with so thin a veil that every attentive observer must discern it is the same still;) or, 3. That we are justified by faith alone, but by such a faith as includes all good works.‡ What a poor shift is this—'I will not say we are justified by works, nor yet by faith and works, because I have subscribed articles and homilies which maintain just the contrary. No; I say we are justified by faith alone. But then by faith I mean works!'"

After visiting Bristol, he was recalled to London to attend the last moments of his mother:—"Friday, July 30th, about three in the afternoon, I went to my mother, and found her change was near. I sat down on the bed-side. She was in her last conflict, unable to speak, but, I believe, quite sensible. Her look was calm and serene, and her eyes fixed upward, while we commended her soul to God. From three to four, the silver cord was loosening, and the wheel breaking at the cistern; and then, without any struggle, or sigh, or groan, the soul was set at liberty. We stood round the bed, and fulfilled her last request, uttered a little before she lost her speech, 'Children, as soon as I am released, sing a psalm of praise to God.'" *

So decided a witness was this venerable and intellectual woman of the assurance of faith; a doctrine she had learned from her sons more clearly to understand. To their sound views, on this scriptural and important subject, the latter years of her life and her death, gave a testimony which to them must have been, in the highest degree, delightful and encouraging. The following beautiful epitaph, written by her son Charles, was inscribed on her tombstone in Bunhill Fields:—

"In sure and steadfast hope to rise,
And claim her mansion in the skies,
A Christian here her flesh laid down,
The cross exchanging for a crown.

True daughter of affliction, she,
Inured to pain and misery,
Mourn'd a long night of griefs and fears,
A legal night of seventy years.

The Father then reveal'd his Son,
Him in the broken bread made known:
She knew and felt her sins forgiven,
And found the earnest of her heaven.

Meet for the fellowship above,
She heard the call, 'Arise, my love!'
'I come,' her dying looks replied,
And lamb-like, as her Lord, she died."

The labors of Mr. Charles Wesley had been very extended and arduous during the early part of the year 1743, and, by the divine blessing, eminently successful. From the west of England he proceeded to the colliers of Staffordshire, who had before been visited, and found that the society at Wednesbury had increased to more than three hundred, of whose religious state he speaks, in his Journal, with strong feelings of joy. At Walsall, he preached on the market-house steps:—

"The street was full of fierce Ephesian beasts, (the principal man setting them on,) who roared and shouted, and threw stones incessantly. At the conclusion a stream of ruffians was suffered to beat me down from the steps: I rose, and having given the blessing, was beat down again; and so a third time. When we had returned thanks to the God of our salvation, I then from the steps bid them depart in peace, and walked through the hickest of the rioters. They reviled us, but had no commission to touch a hair of our head."

He then proceeded to Birmingham, Nottingham, and then to Sheffield. Here the infant society was as a "flock among wolves;" the minister having so stirred up the people, that they were ready to tear the Methodists in pieces. At six o'clock, I went to the society house, next door to our brother Bennet's. Hell from beneath was moved to oppose us. As soon as I was in the desk, with David Taylor, the floods began to lift up their voice. An officer in the army contradicted and blasphemed. I took no notice of him, but sang on. The stones flew thick, striking the desk and the people. To save them, and the house from being pulled down, I gave out, that I should preach in the street, and look them in the face. The whole army of the aliens followed me. The captain laid hold on me, and began rioting; I gave him for answer, "A Word in Season, or Advice to a Soldier." I then prayed particularly for his majesty King George, and "preached the gospel with much contention." The stones often struck me in the face. I prayed for sinners, as servants of their master, the devil; upon which the cap-

* Journal. † Journal.

‡ Although the faith which justifies does not *include* good works, it will, when it has justified us, *produce*, and be *followed by* good works; because it brings us into vital union with Christ

* Journal.

tain ran at me with great fury, threatening revenge for abusing, as he called it, 'the king his master.' He forced his way through the brethren, drew his sword, and presented it to my breast. I immediately opened my breast, and fixing my eye on his, and smiling in his face, calmly said, 'I fear God, and honor the king.' His countenance fell in a moment, he fetched a deep sigh, and putting up his sword, quietly left the place. He had said to one of the company who afterwards informed me, 'You shall see if I do but hold my sword to his breast, he will faint away.' So, perhaps, I should, had I only his principles to trust to; but if at that time I was not afraid, no thanks to my natural courage. We returned to our brother Bennet's and gave ourselves up to prayer. The rioters followed, and exceeded in outrage all I have seen before. Those at Moorfields, Cardiff, and Walsall, were lambs to these. As there is no 'king in Israel,' I mean no magistrate in Sheffield, every man doeth as seemeth good in his own eyes." The mob now formed the design of pulling down the society house, and set upon their work, while Mr. Charles Wesley and the people were praying and praising God within. "It was a glorious time," says he, "with us; every word of exhortation sunk deep, every prayer was sealed, and many found the spirit of glory resting upon them." The next day the house was completely pulled down, not one stone being left upon another. He then preached again in the street, somewhat more quietly than before; but the rioters became very noisy in the evening, and threatened to pull down the house where he lodged. He went out to them and made a suitable exhortation, and they soon afterwards separated, and peace was restored.

At five the next morning, he took leave of the society in these words, "Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." He observes, "Our hearts were knit together, and greatly comforted: we rejoiced in hope of the glorious appearing of the great God, who had now delivered us out of the mouth of the lions. David Taylor had informed me, that the people of Thorpe, through which we should pass, were exceedingly mad against us. So we found them as we approached the place, and were turning down the lane to Barley-Hall. The ambush rose, and assaulted us with stones, eggs, and dirt. My horse flew from side to side, till he found his way through them. They wounded David Taylor in the forehead, and the wound bled much. I turned back, and asked what was the reason, that a clergyman could not pass without such treatment. At first the rioters scattered, but their captain rallying them, answered with horrible imprecations and stones. My horse took fright, and turned away with me down a steep hill. The enemy pursued me from afar, and followed shouting. Blessed be God, I received no hurt, only from the eggs and dirt. 'My clothes indeed abhorred me,' and my arm pained me a little from a blow I received at Sheffield."*

Such was the calm heroism with which these admirable men prosecuted their early labors; shrinking from no danger, and firmly trusting their lives in the hands of God. Proceeding to Leeds, Mr. Charles Wesley preached "to thousands," before Mr. Shent's door, and found the people "prepared for the Lord." The clergy of Leeds treated him with respect and deference, and obliged him to assist at the sacrament: such indeed was their kindness, that he began to fear this gleam of sunshine, "more than the stones at Sheffield." He then went on to Newcastle, where he not only abounded in public labors, but, as the society had rapidly increased, he instituted a strict investigation into their spiritual state, accurately distinguishing between animal emotions, and the true work of God in the heart, and leading all to try themselves by the only infallible rule, their conformity to the word of God. So unjust are the insinuations, that the founders of Methodism allowed excited affections to pass as admitted proofs of a change of heart. On this visit to Newcastle, Mr. Charles Wesley remarks in his Journal, that since he had preached the gospel, he had never had greater success than at this time at Newcastle. Soon after his brother laid the foundation of a place for the public worship of the society, the size of which greatly startled some of the people, as they doubted whether money could be raised to finish it. "I was of another mind," he observes, "nothing doubting, but as it was begun for the Lord's sake, he would provide what was needful for finishing it." Many pecuniary difficulties arose in the completion of this work: but he received timely supplies of money, sometimes from very unexpected quarters. During this year new societies were formed in the western, midland, and northern counties, whilst those before collected continued greatly to increase.

In the latter end of this year, 1743, Mr. Wesley appointed in London visiters of the sick, as a distinct office in his society. He says, "It was not long before the stewards found a great difficulty, with regard to the sick. Some were ready to perish before they knew of their illness. And when they did know, it was not in their power, (being persons generally employed in trade,) to visit them so often as they desired. When I was apprized of this, I laid the case at large before the whole society; showed how impossible it was for the stewards to attend all that were sick in all parts of the town; desired the leaders of the classes would more carefully inquire, and more constantly inform them, who were sick; and asked, Who among you is willing as well as able, to supply this lack of service?

"The next morning, many willingly offered themselves. I chose six and forty of them, whom I judged to be of the most tender, loving spirit, divided the town into twenty-three parts, and desired two of them to visit the sick in each division.

"It is the business of a visiter of the sick,

"1. To seek every sick person within his district thrice a week. 2. To inquire into the state of their souls and advise them as occasion may require. 3. To inquire into their disorders, and procure advice for them. 4. To relieve them if they are in want. 5. To do any thing for them, which he (or she) can do. 6. To bring in his account weekly to the steward."—"Upon reflection, I saw, how exactly in this also we had copied after the primitive church. What were the ancient deacons? What was Phebe, the deaconess, but such a visiter of the sick?

"I did not think it needful to give them any particular rules, besides those that follow:—

"1. Be plain and open in dealing with souls. 2. Be mild, tender, patient. 3. Be cleanly in all you do for the sick. 4. Be not nice."

The same year was remarkable in the life of Mr. Wesley for his escape from one of the most dangerous of his encounters with deluded and infuriated mobs. It was first incited by a sermon preached in Wednesbury church, by the clergyman. "I never," says Mr. Wesley, "heard so wicked a sermon, and delivered with such bitterness of voice and manner." Whilst Mr. Wesley was at Bristol, he heard of the effect produced by this charitable address of the minister to his parishioners who was assisted

* Journal.

in stirring up the persecution against the society, as was very frequent in those days, by the neighboring magistrates—full of what they called churchmanship and loyalty. At Wednesbury, Darlaston, and West Bromwich, the mobs were stimulated to abuse the Methodists in the most outrageous manner; even women and children were beaten, stoned, and covered with mud; their houses broken open, and their goods spoiled or carried away.* Mr. Wesley hastened to comfort and advise this harassed people as soon as the intelligence reached him, and preached at noon at Wednesbury without molestation; but in the afternoon the mob surrounded the house. The result will best be given from his own account, which displays at once his own admirable presence of mind, and the singular providence of God:—

"I was writing at Francis Ward's in the afternoon, when the cry arose that the mob had beset the house. We prayed that God would disperse them: and so it was; one went this way another that, so that in half an hour not a man was left. I told our brethren, Now is the time to go; but they pressed me exceedingly to stay. So, that I might not offend them, I sat down, though I foresaw what would follow. Before five the mob surrounded the house again, and in greater numbers than ever. The cry of one and all was, 'Bring out the minister, we will have the minister.' I desired one to take the captain by the hand and bring him into the house. After a few sentences, interchanged between us, the lion was become a lamb. I desired him to go, and bring one or two of the most angry of his companions. He brought in two, who were ready to swallow the ground with rage; but in two minutes they were as calm as he. I then bade them make way, that I might go out among the people. As soon as I was in the midst of them, I called for a chair, and asked, 'What do any of you want with me?' Some said, 'We want you to go with us to the justice.' I replied, 'That I will with all my heart.' I then spoke a few words, which God applied; so that they cried out with might and main, 'The gentleman is an honest gentleman, and we will spill our blood in his defence.' I asked, 'Shall we go to the justice to-night, or in the morning?' Most of them cried, 'To-night, to-night!' on which I went before, and two or three hundred followed, the rest returning whence they came.

"The night came on before we had walked a mile, together with a heavy rain. However, on we went to Bentley-Hall, two miles from Wednesbury. One or two ran before, to tell Mr. Lane they had brought Mr. Wesley before his worship. Mr. Lane replied, 'What have I to do with Mr. Wesley? Go and carry him back again.' By this time the main body came up, and began knocking at the door. A servant told them Mr. Lane was in bed. His son followed, and asked what was the matter. One replied, 'Why, an't please you, they sing psalms all day; nay and make folks rise at five in the morning: and what would your worship advise us to do?' 'To go home,' said Mr. Lane, 'and be quiet.'

"Here they were at a full stop, till one advised to go to Justice Persehouse, at Walsall. All agreed to this; so we hastened on, and about seven came to his house. But Mr. Persehouse also sent word that he was in bed. Now they were at a stand again: but at last they all thought it the wisest course to make the best of their way home. About fifty of them undertook to convoy me; but we had not gone a hundred yards, when the mob of Walsall came pouring in like a flood, and bore down all before them. The Darlaston mob made what defence they could, but they were weary, as well as outnumbered; so that, in a short time, many being knocked down, the rest went away, and left me in their hands.

"To attempt speaking was vain; for the noise on every side was like the roaring of the sea: so they dragged me along till we came to the town, where seeing the door of a large house open, I attempted to go in; but a man catching me by the hair, pulled me back into the middle of the mob. They made no more stop till they had carried me through the main street, from one end of the town to the other. I continued speaking all the time to those within hearing, feeling no pain or weariness. At the west end of the town, seeing a door half open, I made towards it, and would have gone in; but a gentleman in the shop would not suffer me, saying they would pull the house to the ground. However, I stood at the door and asked, 'Are you willing to hear me speak?' Many cried out, 'No, no! knock his brains out; down with him; kill him at once.' Others said, 'Nay, but we will hear him first.' I began asking, 'What evil have I done? Which of you all have I wronged in word or deed?' and continued speaking for above a quarter of an hour, till my voice suddenly failed. Then the floods began to lift up their voice again; many crying out, 'Bring him away! bring him away!'

"In the meantime my strength and voice returned and I broke out aloud into prayer. And now the man who just before headed the mob, turned and said, 'Sir, I will spend my life for you; follow me, and not one soul here shall touch a hair of your head.' Two or three of his fellows confirmed his words, and got close to me immediately. At the same time the gentleman in the shop cried out, 'For shame, for shame; let him go.' An honest butcher, who was a little farther off, said it was a shame they should do thus; and pulled back four or five, one after another, who were running on the most fiercely. The people then, as if it had been by common consent, fell back to the right and left; while those three or four men took me between them, and carried me through them all: but on the bridge the mob rallied again; we therefore went on one side, over the mill-dam, and thence through the meadows; till, a little before ten, God brought me safe to Wednesbury; having lost only one flap of my waistcoat, and a little skin from one of my hands.

"From the beginning to the end I found the same presence of mind as if I had been sitting in my own study. But I took no thought for one moment before another; only once it came into my mind, that if they should throw me into the river, it would spoil the papers that were in my pocket. For myself, I did not doubt but I should swim across, having but a thin coat, and a light pair of boots.

"The circumstances that follow I thought were particularly remarkable: 1. That many endeavored to throw me down while we were going down-hill, on a slippery path to the town; as well judging, that if I was once on the ground I should hardly rise any more. But I made no stumble at all, nor the least slip, till I was entirely out of their hands. 2. That although many strove to lay hold of my collar or clothes to pull me down, they could not fasten at all; only one got fast hold of the flap of my waistcoat, which was soon left in his hand. 3. That a lusty man just behind, struck at me several times with a large oaken stick; with which if he had struck me once on the back part of my head, it would have saved him all farther trou-

* The descendants of some of these persecuted people still remain, and show, one a cupboard, another some other piece of furniture, the only article saved from the wreck, and preserved with pious care, as a monument of the sufferings of their ancestors.

ble: but every time the blow was turned aside, I know not how. 4. That another came rushing through the press, and raising his arm to strike, on a sudden let it drop, and only stroked my head saying, 'What soft hair he has!' 5. That I stopped exactly at the mayor's door, as if I had known it, which the mob doubtless thought I did, and found him standing in the shop; which gave the first check to the madness of the people. 6. That the very first men whose hearts were turned, were the heroes of the town, the captains of the rabble on all occasions; one of them having been a prize-fighter at the bear-gardens. 7. That from first to last I heard none give a reviling word, or call me by any opprobrious name whatever. But the cry of one and all was, 'The preacher! the preacher! the parson! the minister!' 8. That no creature, at least within my hearing, laid any thing to my charge, either true or false; having in the hurry quite forgot to provide themselves with an accusation of any kind. And, lastly, they were utterly at a loss what they should do with me; none proposing any determinate thing, only, 'Away with him; kill him at once.'

"When I came back to Francis Ward's, I found many of our brethren waiting upon God. Many also, whom I had never seen before, came to rejoice with us; and the next morning as I rode through the town, in my way to Nottingham, every one I met expressed such a cordial affection, that I could scarce believe what I saw and heard."

At Nottingham he met with Mr. Charles Wesley, who has inserted in his Journal a notice of the meeting, highly characteristic of the spirit of martyrdom in which both of them lived:—

"My brother came, delivered out of the mouth of the lions! His clothes were torn to tatters; he looked like a soldier of Christ. The mob of Wednesbury, Darlaston, and Walsall, were permitted to take and carry him about for several hours, with a full intent to murder him: but his work is not yet finished, or he had been now with the souls under the altar." Undaunted by the usage of John, Charles immediately set out for Wednesbury, to encourage the societies.

In this year Mr. Wesley made his first journey into Cornwall, where his brother, led by the same sympathies to communicate the gospel to the then rude and neglected miners of that extreme part of the kingdom, as had induced him to visit the colliers of Kingswood, Staffordshire, and the North, had preceded him. Here he had preached in various places, sometimes amidst mobs, "as desperate as that at Sheffield." Mr. Wesley followed in August, and came to St. Ives, where he found a small religious society, which had been formed upon Dr. Woodward's plan. They gladly received him, and formed the nucleus of the Methodist societies in Cornwall, which from this time rapidly increased. In this visit he spent three weeks, preaching in the most populous parts of the mining district, with an effect which still continues to be felt. In no part of England has Methodism obtained more influence than in the west of Cornwall. It has become in fact the leading profession of the people, and its moral effects upon society may be looked upon with the highest satisfaction and gratitude. Nor were the Cornish people ungrateful to the instrument of the benefit. When he was last in the county, in old age, the man who had formerly slept on the ground for want of a lodging, and picked black-berries to satisfy his hunger, and who had narrowly escaped with his life from a desperate mob at Falmouth, passed through the towns and villages as in a triumphal march, whilst the windows were crowded with people, anxious to get a sight of him, and to pronounce upon him their benedictions."

Between this visit and that of the next year, a hot persecution, both of the preachers and people, broke forth. The preaching-house at St. Ives was pulled to the ground: one of the preachers was impressed and sent for a soldier, as were several of the people: whilst being stoned, covered with dirt, and abused, was the treatment which many others of them met with from day to day. But notwithstanding this, they who had been eminent for hurling, fighting, drinking, and all manner of wickedness, continued eminent for sobriety, piety, and meekness. The impressment of the preachers for soldiers by the magistrates, was not, however, confined to Cornwall. About the same time, John Nelson, and Thomas Beard were thus seized and sent for soldiers, for no other crime, either committed or pretended, than that of calling sinners to repentance. The passive heroism of John Nelson is well known. Thomas Beard also was "nothing terrified by his adversaries;" but his body after a while sunk under affliction. He was then lodged in the hospital of Newcastle, where he still praised God continually. His fever increasing, he was let blood: his arm festered, mortified, and was cut off; two or three days after which, God signed his discharge, and called him to his eternal home.

The riots in Staffordshire, also, still continued. "The mob of Walsall, Darlaston, and Wednesbury, hired for the purpose by their superiors, broke open their poor neighbors' houses at their pleasure by day and by night; extorting money from the few that had it, taking away or destroying their victuals and goods, beating and wounding their bodies, insulting the women, and openly declaring they would destroy every Methodist in the country. Thus his majesty's peaceable and loyal subjects were treated for eight months, and were then publicly branded in the Whitehall and London Evening Post, for rioters and incendiaries!"*

Several other instances of the brutal maltreatment of the preachers occurred in these early periods, which ended in disablement, or premature death. The persecution at St. Ives, Mr. Wesley observes, "was owing in great measure to the indefatigable labors of Mr. Hoblin, and Mr. Simmons, gentlemen worthy to be had in everlasting remembrance for their unwearied endeavors to destroy heresy.

Fortunati ambo! Siquid mea pagina possit,
Nulla dies unquam memori vos eximet ævo.

"Happy both! Long as my writings, shall your fame remain."

In August, 1744, Mr. John Wesley preached for the last time before the university of Oxford. Mr. Charles Wesley was present, and observes in his journal: "My brother bore his testimony before a crowded audience, much increased by the races. Never have I seen a more attentive congregation; they did not suffer a word to escape them. Some of the heads of colleges stood up the whole time, and fixed their eyes upon him. If they can endure sound doctrine, like his, he will surely leave a blessing behind him. The vice-chancellor sent after him, and desired his notes, which he sealed up and sent immediately."

His own remarks upon this occasion are, "I am now clear of the blood of those men. I have fully delivered my own soul. And I am well pleased that it should be the very day on which, in the last century, near two thousand burning and shining lights were put out at one stroke. Yet what a wide difference is there between their case and mine!—They were turned out of house and home, and all that they had; whereas I am only hindered from

* Whitehead's Life.

preaching in one place, without any other loss, and that in a kind of honorable manner; it being determined, that, when my next turn to preach came, they would pay another person to preach for me. And so they did twice or thrice, even to the time I resigned my fellowship."*

Mr. Wesley had at this time a correspondence with the Rev. James Erskine, from whom he learned that several pious ministers and others, in Scotland, duly appreciated his character, and rejoiced in the success of his labors, notwithstanding the difference of their sentiments. Mr. Erskine's letter indeed contains a paragraph which breathes a liberality not very common in those days, and which may be useful in the present, after all our boastings of enlarged charity: "Are the points which give the different denominations, (to Christians,) and from whence proceed separate communities, animosities, evil speakings, surmises, and, at least, coolness of affection, aptness to misconstrue, slowness to think well of others, stiffness in one's own conceits, and over-valuing one's own opinion, &c. &c. are these points (at least among the far greatest part of protestants) as important, as clearly revealed, and as essential, or as closely connected with the essentials of practical Christianity, as the loving of one another with a pure heart fervently, and not forsaking, much less refusing, the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some was, and now of almost all is ?"†

In a subsequent letter this excellent man expresses an ardent wish for union among all those of different denominations and opinions who love the Lord Jesus Christ; and on such a subject, he was speaking to a kindred mind; for no man ever set a better example of Christian charity, and no where is the excellence and obligation of that temper more forcibly drawn and inculcated than in his most interesting sermon on "A Catholic Spirit." With such a testimony and example before them, his followers would be the most inexcusable class of Christians were they to indulge in that selfish sectarianism with which he was so often unjustly charged; and for which they, though not faultless in this respect, have also been censured more frequently and indiscriminately than they have merited. It would scarcely be doing justice to this part of Mr. Wesley's character not to insert an extract from the sermon alluded to:—

"Is thy heart right with God? If it be, give me thy hand. I do not mean, 'Be of my opinion.' You need not. I do not expect, or desire it. Neither do I mean, 'I will be of your opinion.' I cannot. It does not depend on my choice; I can no more think, than I can see or hear as I will. Keep you your opinion; I mine; and that as steadily as ever. You need not endeavor to come over to me, or bring me over to you. I do not desire you to dispute those points, or to hear or speak one word concerning them. Let all opinions alone on one side and the other. Only 'give me thine hand.'

"I do not mean, 'Embrace my modes of worship; or, I will embrace yours.' This also is a thing which does not depend either on your choice or mine. We must both act as each is fully persuaded in his own mind. Hold you fast that which you believe is most acceptable to God, and I will do the same. I believe the Episcopal form of church government to be scriptural and apostolical. If you think the Presbyterian or Independent is better, think so still, and act accordingly. I believe infants ought to be baptized, and that this may be done by either dipping or sprinkling. If you are otherwise persuaded, be so still, and follow your own persuasion. It appears to me, that forms of prayer are of excellent use, particularly in the great congregation. If you judge extemporary prayer to be of more use, act suitable to your own judgment. My sentiment is, that I ought not to forbid water, wherein persons may be baptized; and, that I ought to eat bread and drink wine, as memorials of my dying master. However, if you are not convinced of this, act according to the light you have. I have no desire to dispute with you one moment upon any of the preceding heads. Let all these smaller points stand aside. Let them never come into sight. "If thine heart be as my heart,' if thou love God and all mankind, I ask no more: 'Give me thy hand.'

"I mean, First, love me. And that not only as thou lovest all mankind; not only as thou lovest thine enemies, or the enemies of God, those that hate thee, that 'despitefully use thee, and persecute thee;' not only as a stranger, as one of whom thou knowest neither good nor evil. I am not satisfied with this. No; 'If thine heart be right, as mine with thy heart,' then love me with a very tender affection, as a friend that is closer than a brother, as a brother in Christ, a fellow citizen of the New Jerusalem, a fellow soldier engaged in the same warfare, under the same captain of our salvation. Love me as a companion in the kingdom and patience of Jesus, and a joint heir of his glory.

"Love me (but in a higher degree than thou dost the bulk of mankind) with the love that is 'long-suffering and kind;' that is patient, if I am ignorant or out of the way, bearing and not increasing my burden; and is tender, soft, and compassionate still; that 'envieth not,' if at any time it please God to prosper me in this work even more than thee. Love me with the love that 'is not provoked' either at my follies or infirmities, or even at my acting (if it should sometimes so appear to thee) not according to the will of God. Love me so as to 'think no evil' of me, to put away all jealousy and evil surmising. Love me with the love that 'covereth all things;' that never reveals either my faults or infirmities; that 'believeth all things,' is always willing to think the best, to put the fairest construction on all my words and actions; that 'hopeth all things;' either that the thing related was never done, or not done with such circumstances as are related; or at least, that it was done with a good intention, or in a sudden stress of temptation. And hope to the end, that whatever is amiss will, by the grace of God, be corrected, and whatever is wanting, supplied, through the riches of his mercy in Christ Jesus."*

And then, having shown how a catholic spirit differs from practical and speculative latitudinarianism and indifference, he concludes: "A man of a catholic spirit is one who, in the manner above mentioned, 'gives his hand' to all whose 'hearts are right with his heart.' One who knows how to value and praise God for all the advantages he enjoys, with regard to the knowledge of the things of God, the true scriptural manner of worshipping him; and above all, his union with a congregation fearing God and working righteousness. One who, retaining these blessings with the strictest care, keeping them as the apple of his eye, at the same time loves as friends, as brethren in the Lord, as members of Christ and children of God, as joint partakers now of the present kingdom of God, and fellow-heirs of his eternal kingdom, all, of whatever opinion, or worship, or congregation, who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, who love God and man, who rejoicing to please, and fearing to offend God, are careful to abstain from evil, and zealous of good works. He is the man of a truly catholic spirit, who bears all these continually upon his heart, who, having an unspeakable tenderness for their persons, and long-

*Journal. †Ibid. *Sermons.

ing for their welfare, does not cease to commend them to God in prayer, as well as to plead their cause before men; who speaks comfortably to them, and labors by all his words to strengthen their hands in God. He assists them to the uttermost of his power in all things, spiritual and temporal. He is ready 'to spend and be spent for them;' yea, 'to lay down his life for their sake.'"*

The first Conference was held in June, 1744. The societies had spread through various parts of the kingdom; and a number of preachers, under the name of assistants and helpers, the former being superintendents of the latter, had been engaged by Mr. Wesley in the work. Some clergymen, also, more or less co-operated to promote these attempts to spread the flame of true religion, and were not yet afraid of the cross. These circumstances led to the distribution of different parts of the kingdom into circuits, to which certain preachers were for a time appointed, and were then removed to others. The superintendence of the whole was in the two brothers, but particularly in Mr. John Wesley. The annual conferences afforded, therefore, an admirable opportunity of conversing on important points and distinctions of doctrine, that all might "speak the same thing" in their public ministrations; and of agreeing upon such a discipline as the new circumstances in which the societies were placed might require. The labors of the preachers for the ensuing year were also arranged; and consultation was held on all matters connected with the promotion of the work of God, in which they were engaged. Every thing went on, however, not on preconceived plan, but "step by step," as circumstances suggested, and led the way. To the great principle of *doing good* to the souls of men, every thing was subordinated; not excepting even their prejudices and fears, as will appear from the minutes of the first conference, which was held in London, as just stated, in 1744. The ultimate separation of the societies from the church, after the death of the first agents in the work, was at that early period contemplated as a *possibility*, and made a subject of conversation; and the resolution was, "We do and will do all we can to prevent those consequences which are supposed to be likely to happen after our death; but we cannot, in good conscience, neglect the present opportunity of saving souls while we live, for fear of consequences which may possibly, or probably, happen after we are dead." To this principle Mr. Wesley was "faithful unto death," and it is the true key to his public conduct. His brother, after some years, less steadily adhered to it; and most of the clergymen, who attached themselves to Mr. Wesley in the earlier periods of Methodism, found it too bold a position, and one which exposed them to too severe a fire, to be maintained by them. It required a firmer courage than theirs to hold out at such a post; but the founder of Methodism never betrayed the trust which circumstances had laid upon him.

CHAPTER VIII.

The year 1745 was chiefly spent by Mr. Charles Wesley in London, Bristol, and Wales. In the early part of the next year, he paid a visit to a society raised up by Mr. Whitefield, at Plymouth, and from thence proceeded into Cornwall, where he preached in various places with great success; but in some of them amidst much persecution. He reviewed this journey with great thankfulness, because of the effects which had been produced by his ministry; and at the close of it he wrote the hymn beginning with the stanza—

"All thanks be to God,
Who scatters abroad
Throughout every place,
By the least of his servants, his savor of grace:
Who the victory gave,
The praise let Him have;
For the work he hath done;
All honor and glory to Jesus alone!"

On his return to London, through the introduction of Mr. E. Perronet, a pious young man, he visited the Rev. Vincent Perronet, the venerable vicar of Shoreham, in Kent, a very holy and excellent clergyman, of whose wise and considerate counsels the Wesleys afterwards frequently availed themselves, in all matters which involved particular difficulty. The name of Wesley was, however, it seems, every where become a signal for riot; for being invited to perform service in Shoreham church, "as soon," says he, "as I began to preach, the wild beasts began roaring, stamping, blaspheming, ringing the bells, and turning the church into a bear garden. I spoke on for half an hour, though only the nearest could hear. The rioters followed us to Mr. Perronet's house, raging, threatening, and throwing stones. Charles Perronet hung over me to intercept the blows. They continued their uproar after we got into the house."* Mr. E. Perronet returned with him to London, and accompanied him on a tour to the north. On the way, they visited Staffordshire, which was still riotous and persecuting; and Mr. Charles Wesley's young friend had a second specimen of the violent and ignorant prejudice with which these modern apostles were followed. The mob beset the house at Tippen Green, and, beating at the door, demanded entrance. "I sat still," says he, "in the midst of them for half an hour, and was a little concerned for E. Perronet, lest such rough treatment, at his first setting out, should daunt him. But he abounded in valor, and was for reasoning with the wild beasts before they had spent any of their violence. He got a deal of abuse thereby, and not a little dirt, both of which he took very patiently. I had no design to preach; but being called upon by so unexpected a congregation, I rose at last, and read, 'When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory.' While I reasoned with them of judgment to come, they grew calmer by little and little. I then spake to them, one by one, till the Lord had disarmed them all. One who stood out the longest, I held by the hand and urged the love of Christ crucified, till, in spite of both his natural and diabolical courage, he trembled like a leaf. I was constrained to break out into prayer for him. Our leopards were all become lambs; and very kind we were at parting. Near midnight the house was clear and quiet. We gave thanks to God for our salvation, and slept in peace."†

Proceeding onward to Dewsbury, he met with an instance of clerical candor, which, as it was rare in those times, deserves to be recorded: "The minister did not condemn the society unheard, but talked with them, examined into the doctrine they had been taught, and its effects on their lives. When he found that as many as had been affected by the preaching were evidently reformed, and brought to church and sacrament, he testified his approbation of the work, and rejoiced that sinners were converted to God."‡

After visiting Newcastle, he went, at the request of Mr. Wardrobe, a dissenting minister, to Hexham, where the following incidents occurred: "I walked directly to the market-place, and called sinners to repentance. A multitude of them stood staring at me, but all quiet. The Lord opened my

* Sermons.

* Journal. † Ibid. ‡ Whitehead's Life.

mouth, and they drew nearer and nearer, stole off their hats, and listened; none offered to interrupt, but one unfortunate esquire who could get no one to second him. His servants and the constables hid themselves; one he found, and bid him go and take me down. The poor constable simply answered, 'Sir, I cannot have the face to do it, for what harm does he do?' Several papists attended, and the church minister who had refused me his pulpit with indignation. However he came to hear with his own ears. I wish all who hang us first would, like him, try us afterwards.

"I walked back to Mr. Ord's through the people, who acknowledged, 'It is the truth, and none can speak against it.' A constable followed, and told me, 'Sir Edward Blacket orders you to *disperse* the town,' (depart, I suppose he meant,) 'and not raise a disturbance here.' I sent my respects to Sir Edward, and said, if he would give me leave, I would wait upon him and satisfy him. He soon returned with an answer, that Sir Edward would have nothing to say to me; but if I preached again, and raised a disturbance, he would put the law in execution against me. I answered that I was not conscious of breaking any law of God or man; but if I did, I was ready to suffer the penalty; that as I had not given notice of preaching again at the Cross, I should not preach again at that place, nor cause a disturbance any where. I charged the constable, a trembling, submissive soul, to assure his worship that I reverenced him for his office' sake. The only place I could get to preach in was a cock-pit, and I expected Satan would come and fight me on his own ground. 'Squire Roberts, the justice's son, labored hard to raise a mob, for which I was to be answerable; but the very boys ran away from him, when the poor 'squire persuaded them to go down to the cock-pit and cry fire. I called in words then first heard in that place, 'Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.' God struck the hard rock, and the waters gushed out. Never have I seen a people more desirous of knowing the truth at the first hearing. I passed the evening in conference with Mr. Wardrobe. O that all our dissenting ministers were like-minded, then would all dissensions cease for ever! November 28th, at six, we assembled again in our chapel, the cock-pit. I imagined myself in the Pantheon, or some heathen temple, and almost scrupled preaching there at first: but we found 'the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof.' His presence consecrated the place. Never have I found a greater sense of God than while we were repeating his own prayer. I set before their eyes Christ crucified. The rocks were melted, and gracious tears flowed. We knew not how to part. I distributed some books among them, which they received with the utmost eagerness, begging me to come again, and to send our preachers to them."*

After preaching in various parts of Lincolnshire, and the midland counties, Mr. Charles Wesley returned to London: but soon, with unwearied spirit, in company with Mr. Minton, he set off for Bristol, taking Devizes by the way, where he had a narrow an escape for his life as his brother had experienced at Wednesbury. An account of these distinguished ministers of Christ would be imperfect without a particular notice of a few of their greatest perils. They show the wretched state of that country which they were the appointed instruments of raising into a higher *moral* and *civil* condition, and they illustrate their own character. Each of the brothers might truly say with an apostle, and his coadjutors, "We have not received the spirit of fear, but of power, (courage,) of love, and of a sound mind." They felt, too, that they had "received" it; for with them, "boasting was excluded," by that "law of faith" which led them in all things to trust in and glorify God. The account is taken from Mr. Charles Wesley's Journal. The Devizes mob had this peculiarity, that it was led on not only by the curate, but by two dissenters; thus "Herod and Pilate were made friends:"—

"February 25th—a day never to be forgotten. At seven o'clock I walked quietly to Mrs. Philips's, and began preaching a little before the time appointed. For three quarters of an hour, I invited a few listening sinners to Christ. Soon after, Satan's whole army assaulted the house. We sat in a little ground room, and ordered all the doors to be thrown open. They brought a hand engine, and began to play into the house. We kept our seats, and they rushed into the passage; just then, Mr. Borough, the constable, came, and seizing the spout of the engine, carried it off. They swore if he did not deliver it they would pull down the house. At that time they might have taken us prisoners; we were close to them, and none to interpose; but they hurried out to fetch the larger engine. In the mean time, we were advised to send for the mayor; but Mr. mayor was gone out of town, in the sight of the people, which gave great encouragement to those who were already wrought up to a proper pitch by the curate, and the gentlemen of the town, particularly Mr. Sutton and Mr. Willy, dissenters, the two leading men. Mr. Sutton frequently came out to the mob to keep up their spirits. He sent word to Mrs. Philips, that if she did not turn that fellow out to the mob, he would send them to drag him out. Mr. Willy passed by again and again, assuring the rioters he would stand by them, and secure them from the law, do what they would.

"The rioters now began playing the larger engine, which broke the windows, flooded the rooms, and spoiled the goods. We were withdrawn to a small upper room in the back part of the house, seeing no way to escape their violence, as they seemed under the full power of the old murderer. They first laid hold on the man who kept the society-house, and dragged him away, and threw him into the horse-pond, and, it was said, broke his back. We gave ourselves unto prayer, believing the Lord would deliver us; how, or when, we saw not, nor any possible way of escaping; we therefore stood still to see the salvation of God. Every now and then some or other of our friends would venture to us, but rather weakened our hands, so that we were forced to stop our ears and look up. Among the rest, the mayor's maid came, and told us her mistress was in tears about me, and begged me to disguise myself in women's clothes, and try to make my escape. Her heart had been turned towards us by the conversion of her son, just on the brink of ruin. God laid his hand on the poor prodigal, and instead of running to sea, he entered the society. The rioters without continued playing their engine, which diverted them for some time; but their number and fierceness still increased; and the gentlemen supplied them with pitchers of ale, as much as they would drink. They were now on the point of breaking in, when Mr. Borough thought of reading the proclamation; he did so at the hazard of his life. In less than the hour, of above a thousand wild beasts, none were left but the guard. Our constable had applied to Mr. Street, the only justice in town, who would not act. We found there was no help in man, which drove us closer to the Lord; and we prayed with little intermission the whole day.

"Our enemies at their return made their main assault at the back door, swearing horridly they would have me if it cost them their lives. Many seeming accidents concurred to prevent their break-

*Journal.

ing in. The man of the house came home, and instead of turning me out, as they expected, took part with us, and stemmed the tide for some time. They now got a notion that I had made my escape, and ran down to the inn, and played the engine there. They forced the inn-keeper to turn out our horses, which he immediately sent to Mr. Clark's, which drew the rabble and their engine thither. But the resolute old man charged, and presented his gun till they retreated. Upon their revisiting us, we stood in jeopardy every moment. Such threatenings, curses and blasphemies, I have never heard. They seemed kept out by a continual miracle. I remembered the Roman senators, sitting in the forum, when the Gauls broke in upon them, but thought there was a fitter posture for Christians, and told my companions they should take us off of our knees. We were kept from all hurry and discomposure of spirit by a divine power resting upon us. We prayed and conversed as freely as if we had been in the midst of our brethren, and had great confidence that the Lord would either deliver us from the danger, or in it. In the height of the storm, just when we were falling into the hands of the drunken enraged multitude, Mr. Minton was so little disturbed that he fell fast asleep.

"They were now close to us on every side, and over our heads untiling the roof. A ruffian cried out, 'Here they are, behind the curtain.' At this time we fully expected their appearance, and retired to the furthermost corner of the room, and I said, 'This is the crisis.' In that moment Jesus rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. We heard not a breath without, and wondered what was become of them. The silence lasted for three quarters of an hour, before any one came near us; and we continued in mutual exhortation and prayer, looking for deliverance. I often told my companions, 'Now God is at work for us; he is contriving our escape; he can turn these leopards into lambs; can command the heathen to bring his children on their shoulders, and make our fiercest enemies the instruments of our deliverance.' About three o'clock Mr. Clark knocked at the door, and brought with him the persecuting constable. He said, 'Sir, if you will promise never to preach here again, the gentlemen and I will engage to bring you safe out of town.' My answer was, 'I shall promise no such thing; setting aside my office, I will not give up my birth-right as an Englishman, of visiting what place I please of his majesty's dominions.' 'Sir, said the constable, 'we expect no such promise, that you will never come here again; only tell me that it is not your present intention, that I may tell the gentlemen, who will then secure your private departure.' I answered, 'I cannot come again at this time, because I must return to London a week hence. But, observe, I make no promise of not preaching here when the door is opened; and do not you say that I do."

"He went away with this answer, and we betook ourselves to prayer and thanksgiving. We perceived it was the Lord's doing, and it was marvellous in our eyes. The hearts of our adversaries were turned. Whether pity for us, or fear for themselves, wrought strongest, God knoweth; probably the latter, for the mob were wrought up to such a pitch of fury, that their masters dreaded the consequence, and therefore went about appeasing the multitude, and charging them not to touch us in our departure.

"While the constable was gathering his posse, we got our things from Mr. Clark's, and prepared to go forth. The whole multitude were without, expecting us, and saluted us with a general shout. The man Mrs. Taylor had hired to ride before her was, as we now perceived, one of the rioters. This hopeful guide was to conduct us out of the reach of his fellows. Mr. Minton and I took horse in the face of our enemies, who began clamoring against us; the gentlemen were dispersed among the mob, to bridle them. We rode a slow pace up the street, the whole multitude pouring along on both sides, and attending us with loud acclamations. Such fierceness and diabolical malice I have not before seen in human faces. They ran up to our horses as if they would swallow us, but did not know which was Wesley. We felt great peace and acquiescence in the honor done us, while the whole town were spectators of our march. When out of sight we mended our pace, and about seven o'clock came to Wrexall. The news of our danger was got thither before us; but we brought the welcome tidings of our deliverance. We joined in hearty prayer to our Deliverer, singing the hymn,

'Worship, and thanks, and blessing,' &c.

"February 26. I preached at Bath, and we rejoiced like men who take the spoil. We continued our triumph at Bristol, and reaped the fruit of our labors and sufferings."

Amidst such storms, more or less violent, were the foundations of that work laid, the happy results of which tens of thousands now enjoy in peace. But even the piety which could hazard such labors and dangers for the sake of "seeking and saving the lost," and the heroic devotedness which remained constant under them, has not been able to win the praise of prejudiced writers on the subject of Methodism. Dr. Southey* has little sympathy with the sufferings which a persecuted people were doomed in many places so callously to endure; and he finds in the heroism of their leaders a subject of reproach and contempt rather than that of admiration which, had they occupied some poetical position, he had doubtless expressed as forcibly and nobly as any man.

Mr. Whitefield, he tells us, had "a great longing to be persecuted," though the quotation from one of his letters, on which he justifies the aspersion, shows nothing more than a noble defiance of suffering, should it occur in the course of what he esteemed his duty. Similar sarcasms have been cast by infidels upon all who, in every age, have suffered for the sake of Christ; and like those in which Dr. Southey has indulged, they were intended to darken the lustre of that patient courage which sprang out of love to the Saviour and the souls of men, by resolving it into spiritual pride, and a desire to render themselves conspicuous. Of John Nelson, one of Mr. Wesley's first lay coadjutors, who endured no ordinary share of oppression and suffering, as unprovoked and unmerited as the most modest and humble demeanor on his part could render it, Dr. Southey truly says, that "he had as high a spirit, and as brave a heart as ever Englishman was blessed with;" yet even the narration of his wrongs, so scandalous to the magistracy of the day, and which were sustained by him in the full spirit of Christian constancy, is not dismissed without a sneer at this honest and suffering man himself.—"To prison therefore Nelson was taken, to his *heart's content*." And so because he chose a prison rather than violate his conscience, and endured imprisonment and other injuries, with the unbending feeling of a high and noble mind, corrected and controlled by "the meekness and gentleness of Christ, imprisonment was his desire, and the distinction which he is supposed to have derived from it, his motive! Before criticism so flippant and callous, no character, however sacred and revered, could stand. It might be applied with equal success to the persecutions of the apostles, and the first Christians themselves; to the

* Life of Wesley.

confessors in the reign of Mary; and to the whole "noble army of martyrs."

The real danger to which these excellent men were exposed is, however, concealed by Dr. Southey. Whitefield's fears, or rather hopes of persecution, he says, "were suited to the days of Queen Mary, Bishop Gardiner, and Bishop Bonner; they were ridiculous or disgusting in the time of George the Second, Archbishop Potter, and Bishop Gibson." This is said because Mr. Whitefield thought that he might probably be called to "resist unto blood;" and our author would have it supposed, that all this was "safe boasting," in the reign of George the Second, and whilst the English church had its Archbishop Potter, and its Bishop Gibson. But not even in the early part of the reign of George the Third, and with other bishops in the church, as excellent as Potter and Gibson, was the anticipation groundless. The real danger was in fact, so great from the brutality of the populace, the ignorance and supineness of the magistrates, and the mob-exciting activity of the clergy, one of whom was usually the instigator of every tumult, that every man who went forth on the errand of mercy in that day took his life in his hand, and needed the spirit of a martyr, though he was not in danger of suffering a martyr's death by regular civil or ecclesiastical process. Dr. Southey has himself in part furnished the confutation of his own suggestion, that little danger was to be apprehended, by the brief statements he has given of the hair-breadth escapes of the Wesleys, and of the sufferings of John Nelson. But a volume might be filled with the accounts of outrages committed, from that day to our own, in different places, (for they now occasionally occur in obscure and unenlightened parts of the country,) upon the persons of Methodist preachers, for the sole fault of visiting neglected places, and preaching the gospel of salvation to those who, if Christianity be true, are in a state of spiritual darkness and danger. To be pelted with stones, dragged through ponds, beaten with bludgeons, rolled in mud, and to suffer other modes of ill-treatment, was the anticipation of all the first preachers when they entered upon their work; and this was also the lot of many of their hearers. Some lives were lost, and many shortened; the most singular escapes are on record; and if the tragedy was not deeper, that was owing at length to the explicit declarations of George III. on the subject of toleration, and the upright conduct of the judges in their circuits, and in the higher courts, when an appeal was made to the laws in some of the most atrocious cases. Assuredly, the country magistrates in general, and the clergy, were entitled to little share of the praise. Much of this is acknowledged by Dr. Southey; but he attempts to throw a part of the blame upon the Wesleys themselves. "Their doctrines of perfection and assurance" were, he thinks, among the causes of their persecution; and "their zeal was not tempered with discretion." With discretion, in his view of it, their zeal was not tempered. Such discretion would neither have put them in the way of persecution, nor brought it upon them; it would have disturbed no sinner and saved no soul; but they were not indiscreet in seeking danger, and provoking language never escaped lips, in which the law of meekness always triumphed: and as for doctrines, the mobs and their exciters, were then just as discriminating as mobs have ever been from the beginning of the world. They were usually stirred up by the clergy, and other persons of influence in the neighborhood, who were almost as ignorant as the ruffians they employed to assault the preachers and their peaceable congregations. The description of the mob at Ephesus, in the Acts of the Apostles, suited them as well as if they had been the original and not the copy—"Some cried one thing, and some another; for the assembly was confused; and the most part knew not wherefore they had come together." They generally, however, agreed to pull down the preacher, and to abuse both him and his hearers, men, women, and even children; and that because "they troubled them about religion."

That immediate resort to God in prayer, which was practised, in cases of "peril and danger," by these persecuted ministers; and their ascription of deliverances to the divine interposition, as in the instances above given, have also been subjects of either grave rebuke, or semi-infidel ridicule. It is not necessary to contend that every particular instance which, in the Journals of the Wesleys, is referred to an immediate answer to prayer, was so in reality; because a few cases may reasonably appear doubtful. These, however, only prove that they cultivated the habit of regarding God in all things, and of gratefully acknowledging his hand in all the events of life; and if there was at any time any over application of these excellent views and feelings, yet in minds so sober as to make the word of God, diligently studied, their only guide in all matters of practice, no injurious result could follow. But we must reject the Bible altogether, if we shut out a particular providence; and we reduce prayer to a real absurdity, unless we allow that its very ground and reason is special interposition. Why, for instance, should a collect teach us to pray that "this day we may fall into no sin, neither run into any kind of danger," if we do not thereby place ourselves under a special protection of God, and if our interests must necessarily be dragged after the wheel of some general system of government? Divine interposition is indeed *ordinarily* invisible, and can be known only from general results; it impresses no mark of interruption or of quickened activity upon the general course of things, with which we may be surrounded; it works often unconsciously through our own faculties, and through the wills and purposes of others, as unconscious of it as we ourselves; yet even in this case, where the indevout see man only, the better instructed acknowledge God who "worketh all in all." But to say that the hand of God is never specially marked in its operations; that his servants who are raised up by him for important services, shall never receive proofs of his particular care; that an entire trust in him in the most critical circumstances, shall have no visible honor put upon it; that when we are "in all things" commanded to make our requests known unto God, the prayers which, in obedience to that command, we offer to him in the time of trouble shall never have a special answer, is to maintain notions wholly subversive of piety, and which cannot be held without rejecting, or reducing to unmeaningness, many of the most explicit and important declarations of holy Scripture. These were not the views entertained by the Wesleys; and in their *higher belief* they coincided with good men in all ages. They felt that they were about their master's business, and they trusted in their master's care, so long as it might be for his glory that they should be permitted to live. Nor for that were they anxious; desiring only, that whilst they lived they should "live unto the Lord," and that when they died "they should die to him;" and that so "Christ might be magnified in their body whether by life, or by death."

The labors of Mr. John Wesley, during the same period of two years, may be abridged from his Journal. In the first month of the year 1745, we find him at London, and at Bristol, and its neighborhood. In February, he made a journey, in the stormy and wintry weather of that season, to New-

castle, preaching at various intermediate places. The following extract shows the cheerful and buoyant spirit with which he encountered these difficulties:—

"Many a rough journey have I had before; but one like this I never had, between wind and hail, and rain, and ice, and snow, and driving sleet, and piercing cold. But it is past. Those days will return no more, and are therefore as though they had never been.

"'Pain, disappointment, sickness, strife,
Whate'er molests or troubles life;
However grievous in its stay,
It shakes the tenement of clay,
When past, as nothing we esteem;
And pain, like pleasure, is a dream.'"*

As a specimen of that cool and self-possessed manner which gave him so great a power over rude minds, we may take the following anecdote. A man at Newcastle had signalized himself by personal insults offered to him in the streets; and, upon inquiry, he found him an old offender in persecuting the members of the society, by abusing and throwing stones at them. Upon this he sent him the following note:—

"Robert Young,

"I expect to see you, between this and Friday, and to hear from you, that you are sensible of your fault. Otherwise, in pity to your soul, I shall be obliged to inform the magistrates of your assaulting me yesterday in the street.

"I am your real friend,

"John Wesley."

"Within two or three hours, Robert Young came, and promised a quite different behavior. So did this gentle reproof, if not save a soul from death, yet prevent a multitude of sins."†

Whilst at Newcastle, he drew up the following case:—

"*Newcastle-upon-Tyne, March* 11, 1745-6.

"I have been drawing up this morning a short state of the case between the clergy and us: I leave you to make any such use of it, as you believe will be to the glory of God.

"1. About seven years since we began preaching *inward, present* salvation, as attainable by *faith alone.*

"2. For preaching *this doctrine* we were forbidden to preach in the churches.

"3. We then preached in *private houses*, as occasion offered; and when the houses could not contain the people, in the open air.

"4. For *this* many of the clergy *preached* or *printed* against us, as both heretics and schismatics.

"5. Persons who were convinced of sin, begged us to advise them more particularly, how to flee from the wrath to come. We replied, if they would all come at one time (for they were numerous) we would endeavor it.

"6. For *this* we were represented, both from the pulpit and the press, (we have heard it with our ears, and seen it with our eyes,) as introducing popery, raising sedition, practising both against church and state: and all manner of evil was publicly said both of us, and those who were accustomed to meet with us.

"7. Finding some truth herein, viz., that some of those who so met together, walked disorderly, we immediately desired them not to come to us any more.

"8. And the more steady were desired to overlook the rest, that we might know if they walked according to the gospel.

"9. But now several of the bishops began to speak against us, either in conversation or in public.

"10. On this encouragement several of the clergy stirred up the people to treat us as outlaws or mad dogs.

"11. The people did so, both in Staffordshire, Cornwall, and many other places.

"12. And they do so still, wherever they are not restrained by their fear of the secular magistrate.

"Thus the case stands at present. Now what can *we* do, or what can *you* our brethren do toward healing this breach? which is highly desirable; that we may withstand, with joint force, the still increasing flood of popery, deism, and immorality.

"Desire of *us* any thing we can do with a safe conscience, and we will do it immediately. Will *you* meet us here? Will you do what we desire of you, so far as you can with a safe conscience?

"Let us come to particulars. Do you desire us, 1. To preach another, or to desist from preaching this doctrine?

"We think you do not desire it, as knowing we *cannot do this* with a safe conscience.

Do you desire us, 2. To desist from preaching in private houses, or in the *open air?* As things are now circumstanced, this would be the same as desiring us not to preach at all.

"Do you desire us, 3. To desist from advising those who now meet together for that purpose? or, in other words, to dissolve our societies?

"We cannot do this with a safe conscience; for we apprehend many souls would be lost thereby, and that God would require their blood at our hands.

"Do you desire us, 4. To advise them only one by one?

"This is impossible, because of their number.

"Do you desire us, 5. To suffer those who walk disorderly still to mix with the rest?

"Neither can we do this with a safe conscience; because *evil communications corrupt good manners.*

"Do you desire us, 6. To discharge those leaders of bands or classes (as we term them) who overlook the rest?

"This is, in effect, to suffer the disorderly walkers still to mix with the rest, which we dare not do.

"Do you desire us, lastly, to behave with reverence toward those who are overseers of the church of God? and with tenderness, both to the character and persons of our brethren, the inferior clergy?

"By the grace of God, we can and will do this. Yea, our conscience beareth us witness, that we have already labored so to do; and that, at all times and in all places.

"If you ask what we desire of *you* to do, we answer, 1. We do not desire any of you to let us preach in your churches, either if you believe us to preach false doctrine, or if you have upon any other ground, the least scruple concerning it. But we desire that any who believes us to preach true doctrine, and has no scruple at all in this matter, may not be either publicly or privately discouraged from inviting us to preach in his church.

"2. We do not desire that any one who thinks that we are heretics or schismatics, and that it is his duty to preach or print against us as such, should refrain therefrom, so long as he thinks it his duty, (although in this case, the breach can never be healed.)

"But we desire, that none will pass such a sentence, until he has calmly considered both sides of the question; that he would not condemn us unheard, but first read what we have written, and pray earnestly that God may direct him in the right way.

"3. We do not desire any favor, if either popery, sedition, or immorality be proved against us.

"But we desire, you will not credit without proof,

* Journal. † Ibid.

any of those senseless tales that pass current with the vulgar; that, if you do not credit them yourselves, you will not relate them to others; (which we have known done;) yea, that you will confute them, so far as ye have opportunity, and discountenance those who still retail them abroad.

"4. We do not desire any preferment, favor, or recommendation from those that are in authority, either in church or state. But we desire,

"1. That if any thing material be laid to our charge, we may be permitted to answer for ourselves. 2. That you would hinder your dependants from stirring up the rabble against us, who are certainly not the proper judges of these matters; and, 3. That you would effectually suppress, and thoroughly discountenance, all riots and popular insurrections, which evidently strike at the foundation of all government, whether of church or state.

"Now these things you certainly can do, and that with a safe conscience; therefore, until these things are done, the continuance of the breach is chargeable on you and you only."*

It is evident from this paper, that Mr. Wesley's difficulties, arising from his having raised up a distinct people, within the national church, pressed upon him. He desired union and co-operation with the clergy, but his hope was disappointed; and perhaps it was much more than he could reasonably indulge. It shows, however, his own sincerity, and that he was not only led into his course of irregularity, but impelled forward in it, by circumstances which his zeal and piety had created, and which all his prejudices in favor of the church could not control.

After spending some time in Newcastle and the neighboring places, he visited Lincolnshire, Yorkshire, Lancashire, and Cheshire. On his return southward, he called at Wednesbury, long the scene of riot, and preached in peace. At Birmingham he had to abide the pelting of stones and dirt; and on his return to London, he found some of the society inclined to Quakerism; but by reading "Barclay's Apology" over with them, and commenting upon it, they were recovered. Antinomianism, both of mystic and Calvinistic origin, also gave him trouble; but his testimony against it was unsparing. To erroneous opinions, when innocent, no man was more tender; but when they infected the conduct, they met from him the sternest resistance. "I would wish all to observe, that the points in question between us and either the German or English Antinomians, are not points of opinion, but of practice. We break with no man for his opinion. We think and let think."†

In the summer he proceeded to Cornwall, where Dr. Borlase, the historian of that county, in the plenitude of his magisterial authority, still carried on a systematic persecution against the Methodists. He had made out an order for Mr. Maxfield, who had been preaching in various places, to be sent on board a man-of-war, but the captain would not take him. A pious and peaceable miner, with a wife and seven children, was also apprehended under the Doctor's warrant, because he had said "that he knew his sins forgiven;" and this zealous anti-heretic finally made out a warrant against Mr. Wesley himself, but could find no one to execute it. From Cornwall, where his ministry had been attended with great effect, Mr. Wesley proceeded to Wales, and thence to Bristol.

Count Zinzendorf about this time directed the publication of an advertisement, declaring that he and his people had no connection with John and Charles Wesley; and concluded with a prophecy, that they would "soon run their heads against a wall." On this Mr. Wesley contents himself with coolly remarking, "We will not, if we can help it."

He now proceeded northward; and at Northampton called on Dr. Doddridge, from whom he had previously received several letters, breathing the most catholic spirit. At Leeds, the mob pelted him and the congregation with dirt and stones; and the next evening, being "in higher excitement, they were ready," says he, "to knock out our brains for joy that the duke of Tuscany was emperor." On his arrival at Newcastle, the town was in the utmost consternation, news having arrived that the Pretender had entered Edinburgh. By the most earnest preaching, he endeavored to turn this season of alarm to the spiritual profit of the people, and the large congregations whom he addressed in the streets heard with solemn attention. He then visited Epworth, but speedily returned to Newcastle, judging probably, that the place of anxiety and danger was his post of duty. Here he made an offer to the general, through one of the aldermen, to preach to the troops encamped near the town, whose dissolute language and manners greatly affected him; but he seems to have received no favorable answer: so, after preaching a few times near the camp, he returned southwards, endeavoring, at Leeds, Birmingham, and other places, to turn the public agitation, arising from the apprehension of civil war, to the best account, by enforcing "repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ."

Mr. Wesley had occasionally employed himself in writing and getting printed small religious tracts, many thousands of which were distributed. This was revived with vigor on his return to London this year; and he thus, by his example, was probably the first to apply, on any large scale, this important means of usefulness to the reformation of the people. In the form of those excellent institutions called "Tract Societies," the same plan has now long been carried on systematically, to the great spiritual advantage of many thousands. At this period he observes, adverting to the numerous small tracts he had written and distributed, "It pleased God hereby to provoke others to jealousy; insomuch that the lord mayor had ordered a large quantity of papers, dissuading from cursing and swearing, to be printed, and distributed to the train-bands. And this day, an 'Earnest Exhortation to Serious Repentance' was given at every church-door in or near London, to every person who came out, and one left at the house of every householder who was absent from church. I doubt not but God gave a blessing therewith."*

In the early part of 1746, we find the following entry in Mr. Wesley's journal:—"I set out for Bristol. On the road I read over Lord King's account of the primitive church. In spite of the vehement

* Works, vol. ii. pp. 272—275. † Journal.

* Journal.—Previous to this, we find him a tract writer and distributor; for he observes in the year 1742, "I set out for Brentford with Robert Swindels. The next day we reached Marlborough. When one in the room beneath us was swearing desperately, Mr. Swindels stepped down, and put into his hand the paper entitled 'Swear not at all.' He thanked him, and promised to swear no more. And he did not while he was in the house." Mr. Wesley had already written tracts entitled, "A Word to a Smuggler," "A Word to a Sabbath-breaker," "A Word to a Swearer," "A Word to a Drunkard," "A Word to a Street-walker," "A Word to a Malefactor," and several others. He published these that his preachers and people might have them to give away to those who were guilty of these crimes, or in danger of falling into them. He considered this as one great means of spreading the knowledge of God. He also early gave his influence to the Sunday-school system. Mr. Raikes began his Sunday-school in Gloucester in 1781; and in January, 1785, Mr. Wesley published an account of it in his magazine, and exhorted his societies to imitate that laudable example.

prejudice of my education, I was ready to believe that this was a fair and impartial draught. But if so, it would follow, that bishops and presbyters are (essentially) of one order; and that originally every Christian congregation was a church independent on all others!"

The truth is, that Lord King came in only to confirm him in views which he had for some time begun to entertain; and they were such as show, that though he was a church-of-England man as to affection, which was strong and sincere as far as its doctrines and its liturgy were concerned, and though he regarded it with deference as a legal institution, yet in respect of its ecclesiastical *polity* he was even then very free in his opinions. At the second conference in 1745, it was asked, "Is Episcopal, Presbyterian, or Independent church government, most agreeable to reason?" The answer is as follows:—

"The plain origin of church-government seems to be this:—Christ sends forth a person to preach the gospel: some of those who hear him, repent and believe in Christ: they then desire him to watch over them, to build them up in faith, and to guide their souls into paths of righteousness. Here then is an independent congregation, subject to no pastor, but their own; neither liable to be controlled, in things spiritual, by any other man, or body of men whatsoever. But soon after, some from other parts, who were occasionally present, whilst he was speaking in the name of the Lord, beseech him to come over and help them also. He complies, yet not till he confers with the wisest and holiest of his congregation; and with their consent appoints one who has gifts and grace to watch over his flock in his absence. If it please God to raise another flock, in the new place, before he leaves them, he does the same thing, appointing one whom God hath fitted for the work to watch over these souls also. In like manner, in every place where it pleases God to gather a little flock by his word, he appoints one in his absence, to take the oversight of the rest, to assist them as of the ability which God giveth.

"These are deacons, or servants of the church, and they look upon their first pastor, as the common father of all these congregations, and regard him in the same light, and esteem him still as the shepherd of their souls. These congregations are not strictly independent, as they depend upon one pastor, though not upon each other.

"As these congregations increase, and the deacons grow in years and grace, they need other subordinate deacons, or helpers, in respect of whom they may be called presbyters, or elders, as their father in the Lord may be called the bishop or overseer of them all."

This passage is important as it shows that from the first he regarded his preachers, when called out and devoted to the work, as, in respect of primitive antiquity and the universal church, parallel to deacons and presbyters. He also then thought himself a scriptural bishop. Lord King's researches into antiquity, served to confirm these sentiments, and corrected his former notion as to a distinction of orders.

It should here be stated, that, at these early conferences one sitting appears to have been devoted to conversation on matters of discipline, in which the propriety of Mr. Wesley's proceedings in former societies, calling out preachers, and originating a distinct religious community, governed by its own laws, were considered; and this necessarily led to the examination of general questions of church government and order. This will explain the reason why in the conferences which Mr. Wesley, his brother, two or three clergymen, and a few preachers, held in the years 1744, 1745, 1746, and 1747, such subjects were discussed as are contained in the above extract and in those which follow. On these as on all others, they set out with the principle of examining every thing "to the foundation.

"*Q.* Can he be a spiritual governor of the church who is not a believer, not a member of it?

"*A.* It seems not: though he may be a governor in outward things, by a power derived from the king.

"*Q.* What are properly the laws of the church of England?

"*A.* The rubrics: and to these we submit, as the ordinance of men, for the Lord's sake.

"*Q.* But is not the will of our governors a law?

"*A.* No; not of any governor, temporal or spiritual; therefore if any bishop wills that I should not preach the gospel, his will is no law to me.

"*Q.* But if he produce a law against your preaching?

"*A.* I am to obey God rather than man."

"*Q.* Is mutual consent absolutely necessary between the pastor and his flock?

"*A.* No question. I cannot guide any soul, unless he consent to be guided by me; neither can any soul force me to guide him, if I consent not.

"*Q.* Does the ceasing of this consent on either side dissolve this relation?

"*A.* It must in the very nature of things. If a man no longer consent to be guided by me, I am no longer his guide; I am free. If one will not guide me any longer, I am free to seek one who will."

"*Q.* Does a church in the New Testament always mean a single congregation?

"*A.* We believe it does; we do not recollect any instance to the contrary.

"*Q.* What instance or ground is there in the New Testament for a national church.

"*A.* We know none at all; we apprehend it to be a merely political institution.

"*Q.* Are the three orders of bishops, priests and deacons plainly described in the New Testament?

"*A.* We think they are, and believe they generally obtained in the church of he apostolic age.

"*Q.* But are you assured that God designed the same plan should obtain in all churches, throughout all ages?

"*A.* We are not assured of it, because we do not know it is asserted in holy writ.

"*Q.* If the plan were essestial to a Christian church, what must become of all foreign reformed churches?

"*A.* It would follow they are no part of the church of Christ: a consequence full of shocking absurdity.

"*Q.* In what age was the divine right of episcopacy first asserted in England?

"*A.* About the middle of Queen Elizabeth's reign: till then all the bishops and clergy in England continually allowed and joined in the ministrations of those who were not episcopally ordained.

"*Q.* Must there not be numberless accidental variations in the government of various churches?

"*A.* There must, in the nature of things. As God variously dispenses his gifts of nature, providence, and grace, both the offices themselves, and the officers in each, ought to be varied from time to time.

"*Q.* Why is it that there is no determinate plan of church-government appointed in Scripture?

"*A.* Without doubt because the wisdom of God had a regard to that necessary variety.

"*Q.* Was there any thought of uniformity in the government of all churches, until the time of Constantine?

"*A.* It is certain there was not, nor would there

have been then, had men consulted the work of God only."

Nothing therefore can be more clear, than that Mr. Wesley laid the ground-work of his future proceedings, after much deliberation, at this early stage of his progress. He felt that a case of necessity had arisen, calling upon him to provide a ministry and a government for the people who had been raised up; a necessity which rested upon the obvious alternative, that they must either be furnished with pastors of their own, or be left without sufficient aid in the affairs of their souls. This led him closely to examine the whole matter; and he saw that when the authority of Scripture alone was referred to in matters of church arrangement and regulation, it enjoined no particular form of administration as binding, but left the application of certain great and inviolable principles to the piety and prudence of those whom God might honor as the instruments of usefulness to the souls of men. Here he took his stand; and he proceeded to call forth preachers, and set them apart or *ordain them* * to the sacred office, and to enlarge the work by their means, under the full conviction of his acting under as clear a scriptural authority as could be pleaded by churchmen for episcopacy, by the Presbyterians for presbytery, or by the Congregationalists for independency. Still he did not go beyond the *necessity*. He could make this scriptural appointment of ministers and ordinances, without renouncing communion with the national church, and therefore he did not renounce it. In these views Charles Wesley too, who was at every one of the early conferences, concurred with him; and if he thought somewhat differently on these points afterwards, it was Charles who departed from first principles, not John. So much for the accuracy of Dr. Whitehead, who constructed his life of the two brothers upon just the opposite opinion!

The discipline which Mr. Wesley maintained in the societies, was lenient and long-suffering; but where there was an evil at the root, he had an unsparing hand. In March, 1746, he came to Nottingham, and observes, "I had long doubted what it was which hindered the work of God here. But upon inquiry the case was plain. So many of the society were either triflers, or disorderly walkers, that the blessing of God could not rest upon them. So I made short work by cutting off all such at a stroke, and leaving only that little handful, who, as far as could be judged, were really in earnest to save their souls."

At Wednesbury and Birmingham he found that some Antinomian teachers, the offspring of that seed which before the recent revival of religion had been sown in various parts of the country, and who in that concern about spiritual things which now prevailed, began more zealously to bestir themselves to mislead and destroy the souls of men, under pretence of preaching a purer gospel, had troubled the societies. By personal conversation with some of these teachers, in the presence of the people, he drew out the odious extent to which they carried their notions of "Christian liberty;" and thus took an effectual method of exposing and confuting the deadly error.

Upon his return to London, it appeared that certain pretended prophets had appeared in the metropolis, and had excited the attention of many. He gratified his curiosity by going to visit one of them, and with good humored sarcasm observes, that as "he aimed at talking Latin and could not, he plainly showed that he did not understand his own calling." Sober Scotland has in our own day exhibited a similar fanaticism; and the gift of tongues, pretended by some persons there, appears to have proved quite as unsatisfactory an evidence of a divine commission, as in this case. In visiting Newgate he found a penitent and hopeful malefactor; and his Journal affords a specimen of that originality of remark, which peculiar cases, often perplexing to others, called forth from him. "A real, deep work of God seemed to be already begun in his soul. Perhaps by driving him too fast, Satan has driven him to God; to that repentance, which shall never be repented of." When he subsequently visited Dr. Dodd under condemnation, he is reported to have replied to his apologies for receiving him in the condemned cell, "Courage, brother; perhaps God saw that nothing else would do."

Bristol, Wales, Devonshire, and Cornwall, occupied Mr. Wesley's attention during the summer of 1746, and London, Bristol, and the places adjacent, for the remainder of the year. About this time also he received various letters from the army abroad, giving an account of the progress of religion among the soldiers, and of the brave demeanor in battle of many of their Methodist comrades. These accounts appear to have given him great satisfac-

* The act of setting apart ministers by Mr. Wesley, but without imposition of hands, is here called their *ordination*, although that term has not been generally in use among us; and may be objected to by those who do not consider that imposition of hands, however impressive as a form, and in most churches the uniform practice, is still but a *circumstance*, and cannot enter into the *essence* of ordination. That every religious society has the power to determine the mode in which "*the separation*" of its ministers "to *the gospel of God*" shall be visibly notified and expressed, will only be questioned by those whom prejudice and a wretched bigotry have brought under their influence. What the body of Methodists now practice in this respect, will, however, be allowed to stand on clearer ground than the proceedings of Mr. Wesley, who still continued in communion with the church. It has therefore been generally supposed, that Mr. Wesley did not consider his appointment of preachers without imposition of hands, as an *ordination* to the ministry; but only as an irregular employment of laymen in the spiritual office of merely expounding the Scriptures in a case of moral necessity. This, however, is not correct. They were not appointed to expound or preach merely, but were solemnly set apart to the pastoral office, as the minutes of the conference show; nor were they regarded by him as *laymen*, except when in common parlance they were distinguished from the clergy of the church; in which case he would have called any dissenting minister a layman. The first extract from the minutes of the conferences above given, sufficiently shows that as to the church of Christ at large, and as to his own societies, he regarded the preachers when fully devoted to the work, not as *laymen*, but as *spiritual* men, and *ministers;* men, as he says, "moved by the Holy Ghost" to preach the gospel, and who after trial were ordained to that and other branches of the pastoral office. In his sketch of the origin of church government in that extract, he clearly had in view the conformity between what had taken place in his own case, and that which must, in a great number of instances, have occurred in the earliest periods of Christianity; and whilst he evidently refers to himself as the father and bishop of the whole of the societies, he tacitly compares his "assistants" to the ancient "presbyters," and his "helpers" to the ancient "deacons." In point of fact, so fully did he consider himself even in 1747, (whether consistently or not, as a churchman, let others determine, I speak only to the fact,) as *setting apart* or *ordaining* to the ministry, that he appears to have had thoughts of adding imposition of hands to his usual mode of ordination, which was preceded by fasting and private prayer, and consisted of public examination, prayer, and appointment; and he only declines this for *prudential* reasons. "Why," says he, "do we not use more *form* in receiving a new laborer? 1. Because there is something of stateliness in it, and we would be little and inconsiderable. 2. Because we would not *make haste:* we desire barely to follow Providence as it gradually opens." (*Minutes of* 1747.) Even this form therefore was regarded as what might in other circumstances be required. The bearing of these remarks upon some future ordinations of Mr. Wesley by imposition of hands, will be pointed out in its proper place.

tion; and showing the power of religion in new circumstances, and as affording him an answer to his enemies, who asserted that his doctrines had the effect of making men dastardly, negligent of duty, and disloyal. In the early part of the year 1747, we find him braving the snows of February in Lincolnshire; and in March he reached Newcastle, to supply the absence of his brother from that important station.

Among other excellencies possessed by this great man, he was fond of smoothing the path of knowledge, to the diffusion of which he devoted much attention, and for which end he published several compendiums and brief treatises on its most important branches. In this respect also he was foremost to tread in a path, which has been of late years vigorously pursued, and must be reckoned as one of the leaders of that class of wise and benevolent men, who have exerted themselves to extend the benefits of useful information from the privileged orders of society, into the middle and lower classes. "This week," says he, "I read over with some young men, a compendium of rhetoric, and a system of ethics. I see not why a man of tolerable understanding may not in six months' time, learn more of solid philosophy than is commonly learned at Oxford in four (perhaps seven) years."

On his return from his labors in the North of England, he called at Manchester, which he had formerly several times visited in order to take counsel with his college friend Clayton, and Dr. Byrom, and had preached in the churches. He was now seen there in a new character. The small house which was occupied by the society could not contain a tenth part of the people, and he therefore walked to Salford Cross. "A numberless crowd of people partly ran before, partly followed after me. I thought it best not to sing, but looking round, asked abruptly, "Why do you look as if you had never seen me before? Many of you have seen me in the neighboring church, both preaching and administering the sacrament." I then gave out the text, 'Seek ye the Lord while he may be found; call upon him while he is near.' None interrupted at all, or made any disturbance, till, as I was drawing to a conclusion, a big man thrust in, with three or four more, and bade them 'bring out the engine.' Our friends desired me to remove into a yard just by, which I did, and concluded in peace."

From the north he proceeded through Nottingham and Staffordshire to London, and from thence to the West of England. The influence which his calm courage often gave him over mobs was remarkably shown on this journey. "Within two miles of Plymouth, one overtook and informed us, that the night before, all the Dock was in an uproar; and that a constable, endeavoring to keep the peace, was beaten and much hurt. As we were entering the Dock, one met us, and desired we would go the back way. 'For,' said he, 'there are thousands of people waiting about Mr. Hyde's door.' We rode up straight into the midst of them. They saluted us with three huzzas; after which I alighted, took several of them by the hand, and began to talk with them. I would gladly have passed an hour among them, and believe if I had, there had been an end of the riot; but the day being far spent (for it was past nine o'clock,) I was persuaded to go in. The mob then recovered their spirits, and fought valiantly with the doors and windows. But about ten they were weary, and went every man to his own home. The next day I preached at four, and then spoke severally to a part of the society. About six in the evening I went to the place where I preached the last year. A little before we had ended the hymn, came a lieutenant, a famous man, with his retinue of soldiers, drummers, and mob. When the drums ceased, a gentleman-barber began to speak; but his voice was quickly drowned in the shouts of the multitude, who grew fiercer and fiercer as their numbers increased. After waiting about a quarter of an hour, perceiving the violence of the rabble still increasing, I walked down into the thickest of them, and took the captain of the mob by the hand. He immediately said, 'Sir, I will see you safe home. Sir, no man shall touch you. Gentlemen, stand off. Give back. I will knock the first man down that touches him.' We walked on in great peace; my conductor every now and then stretching out his neck, (he was a very tall man,) and looking round, to see if any behaved rudely, till we came to Mr. Hyde's door. We then parted in much love. I stayed in the street near half an hour after he was gone, talking with the people, who had now forgot their anger, and went away in high good humor."

In Cornwall we have a specimen of his prompt and faithful habits of discipline.

"Wednesday, 8. I preached at St. Ives, then at Sithney. On Thursday, the stewards of all the societies met. I now diligently inquired, what exhorters there were in each society? Whether they had gifts meet for the work? Whether their lives were eminently holy? And whether there appeared any fruit of their labor? I found upon the whole, 1. That there were no fewer than eighteen exhorters in the county. 2. That three of these had no gifts at all for the work, neither natural nor supernatural. 3. That a fourth had neither gifts nor grace, but was a dull, empty, self-conceited man. 4. That a fifth had considerable gifts, but had evidently made shipwreck of the grace of God. These therefore I determined immediately to set aside, and advise our societies not to hear them. 5. That J. B., A. L., and J. W., had gifts and grace, and had been much blessed in the work. Lastly, That the rest might be helpful when there was no preacher, in their own or the neighboring societies, provided they would take no step without the advice of those who had more experience than themselves."

In August he visited Ireland for the first time. Methodism had been introduced into Dublin by Mr. Williams, one of the preachers, whose ministry had been attended with great success, so that a considerable society had been already formed. Mr. Wesley was allowed to preach once at St. Mary's, "to as gay and senseless a congregation," he observes, "as I ever saw." This was not, however, permitted a second time; and he occupied the spacious yard of the meeting-house, both in the mornings and evenings, preaching to large congregations of both poor and rich. Among his hearers he had also ministers of various denominations. The state of the Catholics excited his peculiar sympathy; and as he could have little access to them by preaching, he published an address specially for their use. In his Journal he makes a remark on the religious neglect of this class of our fellow-subjects by protestants, which contains a reproof, the force of which has, unhappily, extended to our own times:—"Nor is it any wonder, that those who are born papists, generally live and die such; when the protestants can find no better ways to convert them than penal laws and acts of parliament." The chief perplexities which Ireland has occasioned to the empire are to be traced to this neglect; and the dangers which have often sprung up to the state, from that quarter, have been, and continue to be, its appropriate punishment. Mr. Wesley's visit, at this time, to Ireland, was short; but he requested his brother to succeed him. Mr. Charles Wesley, therefore, accompanied by another preacher, Mr. Charles Perronet, one of the sons of the venerable

vicar of Shoreham, arrived there in September. A persecution had broken out against the infant society in Dublin, and "the first news," says Mr. Charles Wesley, "we heard, was, that the little flock stood fast in the storm of persecution, which arose as soon as my brother left them. The popish mob broke open their room, and destroyed all before them. Some of them are sent to Newgate, others bailed. What will be the event we know not, till we see whether the grand jury will find the bill." He afterwards states that the grand jury threw out the bill, and thus gave up the Methodists to the fury of a licentious mob. "God has called me to suffer affliction with his people. I began my ministry with 'Comfort ye, comfort ye my people,' &c. I met the society, and the Lord knit our hearts together in love stronger than death. We both wept and rejoiced for the consolation. God hath sent me, I trust, to confirm these souls, and to keep them together in the present distress."*

Mr. Charles Wesley spent the winter in Dublin, being daily employed in preaching, and visiting the people. In February he made an excursion into the country, where a few preachers were already laboring, and, in some places, with great success. Thus was the first active and systematic agency for the conversion of the neglected people of Ireland commenced by the Methodists; and, till of late years, it is greatly to be regretted that they were left to labor almost alone. From that time, however, not only was the spirit of religion revived in many protestant parts of the country, and many papists converted to the truth, but the itinerant plan, which was there adopted as in England, enabled the preachers to visit a great number of places where the protestants were so few in numbers as not to be able to keep up regular worship, or to make head, when left to themselves, against popish influence. A barrier was thus erected against the farther encroachments of popery; and the light was kept burning in districts where it would otherwise have been entirely extinguished. The influence of the Methodist societies would, however, have been much more extensive, had not the large emigrations which have been almost constantly setting in from Ireland to America, borne away a greater number of their members in proportion than those of any other community. Mr. Charles Wesley spent part of the year 1748 in Ireland, and preached in several of the chief towns, and especially at Cork, with great unction and success.

CHAPTER IX.

The notices of the journeys and labors of these indefatigable ministers of Christ, given in the preceding chapter, afford but a specimen of the manner in which the foundations of the Methodist connection were carried out and firmly laid. Nor were the preachers under their direction, though laboring in more limited districts of country, scarcely less laboriously employed. At this period one of them writes from Lancashire to Mr. Wesley:—"Many doors are opened for preaching in these parts, but cannot be supplied for want of preachers. I think some one should be sent to assist me, otherwise we shall lose ground. My circuit requires me to travel one hundred and fifty miles in two weeks; during which time I preach publicly thirty-four times, besides meeting the societies, visiting the sick, and transacting other affairs."†

Of the preachers, some were engaged in business, and preached at their leisure in their own neighborhoods; but still, zealous for the salvation of men, they often took considerable journeys. Others gave themselves up, for a time, to more extended labors, and then settled: but the third class, who had become the regular "assistants" and "helpers" of Mr. Wesley, were devoted wholly to the work of the ministry; and, after a period of probation, and a scrutiny into their character and talents at the annual conferences, were admitted, by solemn prayer, into what was called "full connection," which, as we have stated, was their ordination. No provision was, however, made at this early period for their maintenance. They took neither "purse nor scrip;" they cast themselves upon the providence of God, and the hospitality and kindness of the societies, and were by them, like the primitive preachers, "helped forward after a godly sort,"* on their journeys, to open new places, and to instruct those for whose souls "no man cared." It might be as truly said of them as of the first propagators of Christianity, they had "no certain dwelling place." Under the severity of labor, and the wretched accommodations to which they cheerfully submitted, many a fine constitution was broken, and premature death was often induced.

The annual conferences have been mentioned; and that a correct view may be taken of the doctrines, which at those meetings it was agreed should be taught in the societies, it will be necessary to go back to the commencement. At first every doctrine was fully sifted in successive "conversations," and the great principles of godly discipline were drawn out into special regulations, as circumstances appeared to require. After the body had acquired greater maturity, these doctrinal discussions became less frequent; a standard and a test being ultimately established in a select number of Mr. Wesley's doctrinal sermons, and in his "Notes on the New Testament." The free and pious spirit in which these inquiries were entered into, was strikingly marked at the first conferences, in the commencing exhortation:—"Let us all pray for willingness to receive light, to know of every doctrine whether it be of God." The widest principle of Christian liberty was also laid down, as suited to the infant state of a society, which was but just beginning to take its ground, and to assume the appearance of order.

"*Q.* 3. How far does each of us agree to submit to the judgment of the majority?

"*A.* In speculative things, each can only submit so far as his judgment shall be convinced; in every practical point, each will submit so far as he can, without wounding his conscience.

"*Q.* 4. Can a Christian submit any farther than this to any man, or number of men, upon earth?

"*A.* It is plain he cannot; either to bishop, convocation, or general council. And this is that grand principle of private judgment, on which all the reformers at home and abroad proceeded: 'Every man must judge for himself; because every man must give an account of himself to God.'"†

Never it may be affirmed, was the formation of any Christian society, marked by the recognition of principles more liberal, or more fully in the spirit of the New Testament.

To some of the doctrinal conversations of the first conferences, it is necessary to refer, in order to mark those peculiarities of opinion which distinguish the Wesleyan Methodists. It is, however, proper to observe, that the clergymen and others, who thus assembled, did not meet to draw up formal articles of faith. They admitted those of the

* Whitehead's Life.

† Whitehead's Life.

* The want of a provision for their wives and families, in the early periods of Methodism, caused the loss of many eminent preachers, who were obliged to settle in independent congregations.

† Minutes.

church of England; and their principal object was to ascertain how several of the doctrines relative to experimental Christianity, which they found stated in substance in those articles, and farther illustrated in the homilies, were to be understood and explained. This light they sought from mutual discussion, in which every thing was brought to the standard of the word of inspired truth.

Their first subject was *justification*, which they deseribe with great simplicity; not loading it with epithets, as in the systematic schools, nor perplexing it by verbal criticism. It is defined to be "pardon," or "reception into God's favor;" a view which is amply supported by several explicit passages of Scripture, in which the terms "pardon," "forgiveness," and "remission of sins," are used convertibly with the term "justification." To be "received into God's favor," according to these minutes, is necessarily connected with the act of forgiveness, and is the immediate and inseparable consequence of that gracious procedure. The same may be said of *adoption*; which, in some theological schemes, is made to flow from regeneration, while the latter is held to commence previously to justification. In Mr. Wesley's views, adoption as being a *relative* change, is supposed to be neeessarily involved in justification, or the pardon of sin; and regeneration to flow from both, as an inward *moral* change arising from the powerful and effieacious work of the Holy Spirit, who is in that moment given to believers.* To their definition of justification, the minutes add, "It is sueh a state that, if we continue therein, we shall be finally saved;" thus making final salvation conditional, and justification a state which may be forfeited. All wilful sin was held to imply a casting away of vital faith, and thereby to bring a man under wrath and condemnation; "nor is it possible for him to have justifying faith again without previously repenting." They also agree that faith is "the condition of justification;" adding, as the proof, "for every one that believeth not is condemned, and every one who believes is justified." In Mr. Wesley's sermon on justification by faith, the office of faith in justifying is thus more largely set forth:—

"Surely the difficulty of assenting to the proposition, that faith is the *only condition* of justification, must arise from not understanding it. We mean thereby thus mueh, that it is the only thing, without which no one is justified; the only thing that is immediately, indispensably, absolutely requisite in order to pardon. As on the one hand, though a man should have every thing else, without faith, yet he cannot be justified; so on the other, though he be supposed to want every thing else, yet if he hath faith, he cannot but be justified. For suppose a sinner of any kind or degree, in a full sense of his total ungodliness, of his utter inability to think, speak, or do good, and his absolute meetness for hell-fire; suppose, I say, this sinner, helpless and hopeless, casts himself wholly on the merey of God in Christ, (which indeed he eannot do but by the grace of God,) who can doubt but he is forgiven in that moment? Who will affirm that any more is *indispensably required*, before that sinner can be justified?

"And at what time soever a sinner thus believes, be it in his early childhood, in the strength of his years, or when he is old and hoary-headed, God justifieth that ungodly one; God, for the sake of his Son, pardoneth and absolveth him, who had in him, till then, no good thing. Repentance, indeed, God had given him before; but that repentance, was neither more nor less than a deep sense of the want of all good, and the presence of all evil. And whatever good he hath or doeth from that hour, when he first believes in God through Christ, faith does not *find*, but *bring*. This is the fruit of faith. First, the tree is good, and then the fruit is good also."

Mr. Wesley's views of repentance in this passage will also be noted. Here, as at the first conference, he insists that repentance, which is conviction of sin, and works meet for repentance, go before justifying faith; but he held, with the church of England, that all works, before justification, had "the nature of sin;" and that, as they had no root in the love of God, which ean only arise from a persuasion of his being reconciled to us, they could not eonstitute a moral worthiness preparatory to pardon. That a true repentance springs from the grace of God is certain; but whatever fruits it may bring forth, it changes not man's *relation* to God. He is a sinner, and is justified *as such*; "for it is not a saint but a sinner that is forgiven, and under the notion of a sinner." God justifieth the ungodly, not the godly."* Repentance, according to his statement, is necessary to true faith; but faith alone is the direct and immediate instrument of pardon.

Those views of *faith* (of that faith by which a man, thus penitent, comes to God through Christ) which are expressed in the minutes of this first conference, deserve a more particular consideration. Here, as in defining justification, the language of the schools, and of systematic, philosophizing divines, is laid aside, and a simple enunciation is made of the doctrine of the New Testament.—"Faith in general is a divine, supernatural *elenchos* of things not seen, that is, of past, future, or spiritual things. It is a spiritual sight of God, and the things of God."†

In this description, faith is distinguished from mere *belief*, or an intellectual conviction, which the consideration of the evidences of the truth of Scripture may produce, and yet lead to no practical or saving consequence; and that there may be a sincere and undoubting belief of the truth, without produeing any saving effect, is a point which our very consciousness may sufficiently assure us of; although in order to support a particular theory on the subject of faith, this has sometimes been denied. *Trust* is constantly implied in the scriptural accounts of acceptable and saving faith, and this is the sense in which it was evidently taken in the above definition; for its production in the heart is referred to supernatural agency, and it is made to result from, and to be essentially connected with, a demonstration of spiritual things—such a conviction, wrought by the teaching Spirit, as produces not merely a full *persuasion* but a full *reliance*. Six years before this time, Mr. Wesley, in a sermon before the university of Oxford, had more at large expressed the same views as to justifying faith: "Christian faith is not only an assent to the whole gospel of Christ, but also a full reliance on the blood of Christ; a trust in the merits of his life, death, and resurrection; a recumbency upon him as our atonement and our life, as given for us, and living in us. It is a sure confidence which a man hath in God, that, through the merits of Christ, his sins are forgiven, and he reconeiled to the favor of God; and, in consequence hereof, a closing with him, and cleaving to him, as our 'wisdom, righteousness,

*The connection of favor and adoption with *pardon*, arises from the very nature of that act. Pardon, or forgiveness, is release from the penalties and forfeitures incurred by transgression. Of those penalties, the loss of God's favor and of filial relation to him, was among the most weighty;—pardon, therefore, in its nature, or at least in its natural consequenees, implies a restoration to the blessings forfeited, for else the penalty would in part remain in force.

* Sermons. † Minutes.

sanctification, and redemption,' or, in one word, our salvation."*

It will however be remarked, that, in order to support his view of the nature of justifying faith, by the authority of the church of England, Mr. Wesley has quoted her words, from the homily on salvation in the latter part of the above extract; and he thereby involved the subject in an obscurity which some time afterwards he detected and acknowledged. The incorrectness of the wording of the homily is indeed very apparent, although in substance it is sound and scriptural. When that homily defines justifying faith to be "a sure trust and confidence which a man hath in God, that his sins are forgiven, and he reconciled to the favor of God," it is clear that, by the founders of the English church, saving faith was regarded not as mere *belief*, but as an act of *trust* and *confidence* subsequent to the discovery made to a man of his sin and danger, and the fear and penitential sorrow which are thereby produced. The *object* of that faith they make to be God, assuredly referring to God in the exercise of his mercy through the atonement and intercession of Christ; and the trust and confidence of which the homily speaks, must be therefore taken to imply a distinct recognition of the merits of Christ, and a full reliance upon them. So far all is scripturally correct, although not so fully expressed as could be desired. That from such a faith exercised in these circumstances, a "confidence," taking the word in the sense of persuasion or assurance, that "a man's sins are forgiven, and he reconciled to the favor of God," certainly *follows*, is the doctrine of Scripture; and the authority of the homily may therefore also be quoted in favor of that view of assurance at which churchmen have so often stumbled, and to which they have so often scornfully referred, as the fanatical invention of modern sectaries. There is, however, an error in the homily, which lies not in its substance and general intent, but in this, that it applies the same terms, "trust and confidence," both to God's mercy in Christ, which is its proper object, and to "the forgiveness of sins," which is the *consequence* of a sure trust and confidence in God, as exercising mercy "through Christ," because it is that in order to which the trust or confidence is exercised. It follows, therefore, that either there is an error in the latter part of the statement itself; justifying faith not being a confidence that sin is forgiven, which is absurd, because it is the condition previously required in order to the forgiveness of sin; or otherwise, which is probable, that the term "confidence," in the mind of the writer of the homily, was taken in a different sense when applied to God the object of trust, and to the forgiveness of sin; and, when referred to the latter, meant that persuasion of the fact of being forgiven, which must be attributed to a secret assurance of remission and acceptance by the spirit of adoption, and which ordinarily closely follows, or is immediately connected with, justifying faith, but which is not its essence. But "confidence" in this sense implies *filial confidence*, the trust of a child, of one already passed into the family of God, and hence this is rather the description of the habitual faith of a justified man, than of the act by which a sinner is justified and adopted. Mr. Wesley, therefore, soon perceived that the definition of justifying faith in this homily, needed some correction, and he thus expressed his views in 1747, in a letter to his brother:—

"Is justifying faith a sense of pardon? *Negatur.*" It is denied.

"By justifying faith I mean that faith which whosoever hath not is under the wrath and the curse of God. By a sense of pardon I mean a distinct, explicit assurance that my sins are forgiven.

"I allow, 1. That there is such an explicit assurance. 2. That it is the common privilege of real Christians. 3. That it is the proper Christian faith, which purifieth the heart, and overcometh the world." * * * * *

"But the assertion, that justifying faith is a sense of pardon, is contrary to reason; it is flatly absurd. For how can a sense of our having received pardon, be the condition of our receiving it?

"But does not our church give this account of justifying faith? I am sure she does of saving or Christian faith: I think she does of justifying faith too. But to the law and to the testimony. All men may err: but the word of the Lord shall stand for ever."

Mr. Wesley, however, still regarded that trust in the merits of Christ's death, in which justifying faith consists, as resulting from a supernatural conviction that Christ "*loved me*," as an individual, and "*gave himself for me*." In this he placed the proof that faith is "the gift of God," a work of the Holy Spirit, as being produced along with this conviction, or immediately following it. From this supernatural conviction, not only that God was in Christ "reconciling the world unto himself," but that he died "for *my* sins," there follows an entire committal of the case of the soul to the merits of the sacrifice of Christ, in an act of *trust*;—in that moment, he held, God pardons and absolves him that so believes or trusts, and that this, his pardon or justification, is then witnessed to him by the Holy Ghost. Nor can a clearer or simpler view of stating this great subject, in accordance with the Scriptures, be well conceived. The state of a penitent is one of various degrees of doubt, but all painful. He questions the love of God to him, from a deep sense of his sin, although he may allow that He loves all the world beside. Before he can fully rely on Christ, and the promises of the gospel, he must have heightened and more influential views of God's love in Christ, and of his own interest in it. It is the office of the Holy Spirit "to take of the things of Christ, and show them" to the humble mind. This office of the Spirit agrees with that ελεγχος or "divine conviction," of which Mr. Wesley speaks, and which shows, with the power of demonstrative evidence, the love of Christ to the individual himself in the *intention* of his sacrifice. From this results an entire and joyful acquiescence with the appointed method of salvation, and a full reliance upon it, followed, according to the promise of Scripture, with actual forgiveness, and the cheering testimony of the spirit of adoption. Of this faith he allowed different degrees, yet the lowest degree saving; and also different degrees of assurance, and therefore of joy. He was careful to avoid binding the work of the Spirit to one rule, and to distinguish between that *peace* which flows from a comfortable persuasion of "acceptance through Christ," and those higher joys which may be produced by that more heightened assurance which God is pleased in many cases to impart. He taught that the essence of true justifying faith consists in the entire *personal* trust of the man of a penitent and broken spirit upon the merits of his Saviour, as having died for *him*; and that to all who so believe, faith is "imputed for righteousness," or, in other words, pardon was administered.*

* Sermons.

* That Mr. Wesley did not hold that assurance of personal pardon is of the essence of justifying faith is certain, from the remarks in his letter to his brother before quoted, in which he plainly states, that to believe that I am pardoned in order to pardon, is an absurdity and a contradiction. There will, however, appear some obscurity in a few other passages in his writings, unless

The immediate fruits of justifying faith are stated in these minutes to be "peace, joy, love; power over all outward sin, and power to keep down inward sin." Justifying faith, when lost, is not again attainable, except by repentance and prayer; but "no believer need come again into a state of doubt, or fear, or darkness; and that (ordinarily at least) he will not, unless by ignorance or unfaithfulness." Assaults of doubt and fear are however admitted, even after great confidence and joy; and "occasional heaviness of spirit before large manifestations of the presence and favor of God." To these views of doctrine may be added, that regeneration or the new birth is held to be concomitant with justification. "Good works cannot go before this faith; much less can sanctification, which implies a continued course of good works, springing from holiness of heart: but they follow after:" and the reason given for this is, that as salvation, which includes a present deliverance from sin, a restoration of the soul to its primitive health, the renewing of the soul after the image of God, all holy and heavenly tempers and conversation, it is by faith, it cannot precede faith, which is the appointed instrument of attaining it. To increase in all these branches of holiness, the exercise of faith in prayer, and the use of all the means appointed by God, are also necessary; a living faith being that which unites the soul to Christ, and secures the constant indwelling and influence of the Holy Spirit in the heart. Such a faith must therefore necessarily lead to universal holiness of heart and life, and stands as an impregnable barrier against Pharisaism on the one hand, and the pollutions of Antinomianism on the other.

On another doctrine, in defence of which Mr. Wesley afterwards wrote much, these early minutes of conference contain perhaps the best epitome of his views, and may be somewhat at length quoted.

"*Q.* 1. What is it to be sanctified?

"*A.* To be renewed in the image of God, in righteousness and true holiness.

"*Q.* 2. Is faith the condition, or the instrument, of sanctification?

"*A.* It is both the condition and instrument of it. When we begin to believe, then sanctification begins. And as faith increases, holiness increases, till we are created anew.

"*Q.* 3. What is implied in being a perfect Christian?

"*A.* The loving the Lord our God with all our heart, and with all our mind, and soul, and strength. Deut. vi. 5; xxx. 6; Ezek. xxxvi. 25—29.

"*Q.* 4. Does this imply that all inward sin is taken away?

"*A.* Without doubt: or how could he be said to be saved 'from all his uncleannesses?' Ezekiel xxxvi. 29."

And again,—

"*Q.* 1. How much is allowed by our brethren who differ from us, with regard to entire sanctification?

"*A.* They grant, 1. That every one must be entirely sanctified in the article of death.

"2. That, till then, a believer daily grows in grace, comes nearer and nearer to perfection.

"3. That we ought to be continually pressing after this, and to exhort all others so to do.

"*Q.* 2. What do we allow to them?

"*A.* We grant, 1. That many of those who have died in the faith, yea, the greater part of those we have known, were not sanctified throughout, not made perfect in love, till a little before death.

"2. That the term 'sanctified,' is continually applied by Saint Paul to all that were justified, were true believers.

"3. That by this term alone, he rarely (if ever) means, saved from all sin.

we notice the sense in which he uses certain terms, a matter in which he never felt himself bound by the systematic phraseology of scholastic theologians. Thus there is an apparent discrepancy between the statement of his views as given above, and the following passage in his sermon on the "Scripture way of Salvation:"

"Taking the word in a more particular sense, faith is a divine evidence and conviction, not only that 'God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself;' but also that *Christ loved* me, *and gave himself for* me. It is by faith (whether we term it, the *essence*, or rather a *property* thereof) that we *receive Christ*, that we receive him in all his offices, as Prophet, Priest, and King. It is by this that he is 'made of God unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.'

"'But is this the *faith of assurance*, or the *faith of adherence?*' The Scripture mentions no such distinction. The apostle says, 'There is one faith, and one hope of our calling,' one Christian, saving faith, 'as there is one Lord,' in whom we believe, and 'one God and Father of us all.' And it is certain, this faith necessarily implies an *assurance* (which is here only another word for *evidence*, it being hard to tell the difference between them) that *Christ loved* me, and *gave himself* for me. For 'he that believeth,' with the true living faith, 'hath the witness in himself.' 'The Spirit witnesseth with his spirit, that he is a child of God.' 'Because he is a son, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into his heart, crying, Abba, Father;' giving him an assurance that he is so, and a child-like confidence in him. But let it be observed that, in the very nature of the thing, the assurance goes before the confidence. For a man cannot have a child-like confidence in God till he know he is a child of God. Therefore, confidence, trust, reliance, adherence, or whatever else it be called, is not the first, as some have supposed, but the second branch or act of faith."

Yet in fact the only difficulty arises from not attending to his mode of stating the case, and his use of the term *assurance*. When he says that faith includes both adherence and assurance, it is obvious that he does not mean by assurance, the assurance of personal acceptance, which he distinctly, in the same passage, ascribes to the direct testimony of the Spirit of God; but the assurance that Christ "died for *me*," "for *my* sins," which special manifestation of God's love in Christ to me as an individual, producing an entire *trust* in the divine sacrifice for sin, he attributes to a supernatural elenchos or conviction. This, however, he considers as a "conviction" in order to faith or trust; and then the act of personal and entire trust in this manifested love and goodness is succeeded by the direct testimony of the Spirit of adoption, which he tells us gives a man "the assurance that he is a child of God, and a child-like confidence in him." And when he goes on so truly to state, that, "in the very nature of the thing, the assurance goes before the confidence," and that "confidence, trust, or reliance," is not the first but the second branch of faith, he evidently does not here mean that confidence and trust in the merit of Christ by which we are justified, but *filial trust and confidence in God* as our reconciled Father, which must necessarily be subsequent to the other. According to Mr. Wesley's views, the order of our passing into a *state* of justification, and conscious reconcilement to God, is, 1. True repentance, which, however, gives us no worthiness, and establishes no claim upon pardon, although it so necessarily precedes justifying faith, that all trust even in the merits of Christ for salvation would be presumptuous and unauthorized without repentance; since, as he says, "Christ is not even to be offered to the careless sinner."* 2. A supernatural *elenchos*, or assured conviction, that "Christ loved *me*, and *gave* himself for *me*," in the intention of his death; inciting to and producing full acquiescence with God's method of saving the guilty, and an entire personal trust in Christ's atonement for sin. Of this trust, actual justification is the result; but then follows, 3. The direct testimony of the Holy Spirit, giving assurance in different degrees, in different persons, and often in the same person, that I am a child of God; and, 4. Filial confidence in God. The *elenchos*, the *trust*, the *Spirit's witness*, and the *filial confidence* he held, were frequently, but not always, so closely united as not to be distinguished as to *time*, though each is, from its *nature*, *successive* and *distinct*.

* Sermon on the "law established through faith."

"4. That, consequently, it is not proper to use it in this sense, without adding the word 'wholly, entirely,' or the like.

"5. That the inspired writers almost continually speak of or to those who were justified; but very rarely, either of or to those who were wholly sanctified.

"6. That, consequently, it behoves us to speak in public almost continually of the state of justification; but more rarely, at least in full and explicit terms, concerning entire sanctification.

"*Q.* 3. What then is the point wherein we divide?

"*A.* It is this: whether we should expect to be saved from all sin, before the article of death.

"*Q.* 4. Is there any clear Scripture promise of this? that God will save us from *all* sin?

"*A.* There is: Psalm cxxx. 8, "He shall redeem Israel from *all* his sins.'

"This is more largely expressed in the prophecy of Ezekiel: 'Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean; from *all* your filthiness and from *all* your idols will I cleanse you. I will also save you from *all* your uncleannesses:' chap. xxxvi. 25, 29. No promise can be more clear. And to this the apostle plainly refers in that exhortation, 'Having these promises, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.' 2 Cor. vii. 1.—Equally clear and express is that ancient promise, 'The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul.' Deut. xxx. 6.

"*Q.* 5. But does any *assertion* answerable to this, occur in the New Testament?

"*A.* There does, and that laid down in the plainest terms. So St. John iii. 8, 'For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil;' the works of the devil, without any limitation or restriction; but all sin is the work of the devil. Parallel to which is that assertion of St. Paul, Eph. v. 25, 27, 'Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it—that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish.'

"And to the same effect is his assertion in the eighth of Romans, (verses 3, 4,) 'God sent his Son —that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, walking not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.'

"*Q.* 6. Does the New Testament afford any farther ground for expecting to be saved from all sin?

"*A.* Undoubtedly it does, both in those prayers and commands which are equivalent to the strongest assertions.

"*Q.* 7. What prayers do you mean?

"*A.* Prayers for entire sanctification; which, were there no such thing, would be mere mockery of God. Such in particular are, 1. 'Deliver us from evil;' or rather, 'from the evil one.' Now when this is done, when we are delivered from all evil, there can be no sin remaining.—2. 'Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us: I in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one.' John xvii. 20, 21, 23.—3. 'I bow my knees unto the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ—that he would grant you—that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with the fulness of God,' Eph. iii. 14, 16—19.—4. 'The very God of peace sanctify you wholly. And I pray God, your whole spirit, soul, and body, be preserved blameless, unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,' 1 Thess. v. 23.

"*Q.* 8. What command is there to the same effect?

"*A.* 1. 'Be ye perfect, as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.' Matt. vi. ult.

"2. 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind,' Matt. xxii. 37. But if the love of God fill all the heart, there can be no sin there.

"*Q.* 9. But how does it appear, that this is to be done before the article of death?

"*A.* First, from the very nature of a command, which is not given to the dead, but to the living.

"Therefore, 'Thou shalt love God with all thy heart,' cannot mean, Thou shalt do this when thou diest, but while thou livest.

"Secondly, from express texts of Scripture:—

"1. 'The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men; teaching us, that having renounced (ἀρνησάμενοι) ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world: looking for—the glorious appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from *all* iniquity; and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works," Tit. ii. 11—14.

"2. 'He hath raised up an horn of salvation for us—to perform the mercies promised to our fathers: the oath which he sware to our father Abraham, that he would grant unto us, that we, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, should serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life,' Luke i. 69, &c.

"*Q.* 10. Does not the harshly preaching perfection, tend to bring believers into a kind of bondage or slavish fear?

"*A.* It does. Therefore we should always place it in the most amiable light, so that it may excite only hope, joy, and desire.

"*Q.* 17. Why may we not continue in the joy of faith, even till we are made perfect?

"*A.* Why indeed? since holy grief does not quench this joy: since even while we are under the cross, while we deeply partake of the sufferings of Christ, we may rejoice with joy unspeakable.

"*Q.* 18. Do we not discourage believers from rejoicing evermore?

"*A.* We ought not so to do. Let them, all their life long, rejoice unto God, so it be with reverence. And even if lightness or pride should mix with their joy, let us not strike at the joy itself, (this is the gift of God,) but at that lightness or pride, that the evil may cease, and the good remain.

"*Q.* 20. But ought we not to be *troubled* on account of the sinful nature which still remains in us?

"*A.* It is good for us to have a deep sense of this, and to be much ashamed before the Lord. But this should only incite us the more earnestly to turn unto Christ every moment, and to draw light, and life, and strength from him, that we may go on, conquering and to conquer. And therefore, when the sense of our sin most abounds, the sense of his love should much more abound."

The doctrine of assurance, and the source of it, the testimony of the Holy Spirit as the spirit of adoption, are frequently referred to in these early doctrinal conversations. This however is more fully stated in Mr. Wesley's sermons, and the following extracts will be necessary to present his views on this subject in their true light:—

"But what is *the witness of the Spirit?* The original word μαρτυρία, may be rendered either, (as it is in several places,) *the witness*, or, less ambiguously, *the testimony*, or *the record:* so it is rendered in our translation, 1 John v. 11, 'This is the record,' the testimony, the sum of what God testifies in all the inspired writings, 'that God hath given unto us

eternal life, and this life is in his Son.' The testimony now under consideration is given by the Spirit of God to and with our spirit. He is the person testifying. What he testifies to us is, 'that we are the children of God.' The immediate result of this testimony, is, 'the fruit of the Spirit;' namely, 'love, joy, peace; long-suffering, gentleness, goodness.' And without these, the testimony itself cannot continue. For, it is inevitably destroyed, not only by the commission of any outward sin, or the omission of known duty, but by giving way to any inward sin: in a word, by whatever grieves the Holy Spirit of God.

"2. I observed many years ago, 'It is hard to find words in the language of men, to explain the deep things of God. Indeed there are none that will adequately express what the spirit of God works in his children. But, perhaps, one might say, (desiring any who are taught of God to correct, soften, or strengthen the expression,) By the 'testimony of the Spirit,' I mean, an inward impression on the soul, whereby the Spirit of God immediately and directly witnesses to my spirit, that I am a child of God; that 'Jesus Christ hath loved me, and given himself for me;' that all my sins are blotted out, and I, even I, am reconciled to God.

"3. After twenty years' farther consideration, I see no cause to retract any part of this. Neither do I conceive how any of these expressions may be altered, so as to make them more intelligible. I can only add, that if any of the children of God will point out any other expressions which are more clear, or more agreeable to the word of God, I will readily lay these aside.

"4. Meantime let it be observed, I do not mean hereby, that the Spirit of God testifies this by any outward voice: no, nor always by an inward voice, although he may do this sometimes. Neither do I suppose, that he always applies to the heart (though he often may) one or more texts of Scripture. But he so works upon the soul by his immediate influence, and by a strong, though inexplicable operation, that the stormy wind and troubled waves subside, and there is a sweet calm: the heart resting as in the arms of Jesus, and the sinner being clearly satisfied that all his iniquities are forgiven, and his sins covered.'

"5. Now what is the matter of dispute concerning this? Not, whether there be a witness or testimony of the Spirit. Not whether the Spirit does testify with our spirit, that we are the children of God. None can deny this, without flatly contradicting the Scriptures, and charging a lie upon the God of truth. Therefore that there is a testimony of the Spirit, is acknowledged by all parties.

"6. Neither is it questioned whether there is an indirect witness or testimony, that we are the children of God. This is nearly, if not exactly, the same with 'the testimony of a good conscience towards God; and is the result of reason, or reflection on what we feel in our own souls. Strictly speaking, it is a conclusion drawn partly from the word of God, and partly from our own experience. The word of God says, Every one who has the fruit of the Spirit is a child of God. Experience or inward consciousness tells me, that I have the fruit of the Spirit; and hence I rationally conclude, therefore I am a child of God. This is likewise allowed on all hands, and so is no matter of controversy.

"7. Nor do we assert, that there can be any real testimony of the Spirit, without the fruit of the Spirit. We assert, on the contrary, that the fruit of the Spirit immediately springs from this testimony; not always indeed in the same degree even when the testimony is first given; and much less afterwards: neither joy nor peace is always at one stay. No, nor love: as neither is the testimony itself always equally strong and clear.

"8. But the point in question is, whether there be any *direct testimony* of the Spirit at all; whether there be any other testimony of the Spirit, than that which arises from a consciousness of the fruit.

"1. I believe there is, because that is the plain, natural meaning of the text, 'the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God'. It is manifest, here are two witnesses mentioned, who together testify the same thing, the Spirit of God and our own spirit.

The late bishop of London, in his sermon on this text, seems astonished that any one can doubt of this, which appears upon the very face of the words. Now '*the testimony of our own spirit*, (says the bishop,) is one, which is the consciousness of our own sincerity;' or to express the same thing a little more clearly, the consciousness of the fruit of the Spirit. When our spirit is conscious of this, of love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, it easily infers from these premises, that we are the children of God.

"2. It is true, that great man supposes the other witness to be 'the consciousness of our own good works.' This, he affirms, is 'the testimony of God's Spirit.' But this is included in the testimony of our own spirit: Yea, and in sincerity, even according to the common sense of the word. So the apostle, 'Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity we have our conversation in the world;' where it is plain, sincerity refers to our words and actions, at least as much as to our inward dispositions. So that this is not another witness, but the very same that he mentioned before: the consciousness of our good works being only one branch of the consciousness of our sincerity. Consequently here is only one witness still. If therefore the text speaks of two witnesses, one of these is not the consciousness of our good works, neither of our sincerity: all this being manifestly contained in 'the testimony of our spirit.'

"3. What then is the other witness? This might easily be learned, if the text itself were not sufficiently clear, from the verse immediately preceding. 'Ye have received, not the spirit of bondage, but the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.' It follows, 'The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.'

"4. This is farther explained by the parallel text, Gal. iv. 6: 'Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.' Is not this something *immediate* and *direct*, not the result of reflection or argumentation? Does not this Spirit cry, 'Abba, Father,' *in our hearts*, the moment it is given? antecedently to any reflection upon our sincerity, yea, to any reasoning whatsoever? And is not this the plain, natural sense of the words, which strikes any one as soon as he hears them? All these texts then, in their most obvious meaning, describe a direct testimony of the Spirit.

"5. That *the testimony of the Spirit of God* must, in the very nature of things, be antecedent to *the testimony of our own spirit*, may appear from this single consideration. We must be holy in heart and life, before we can be conscious that we are so. But we must love God before we can be holy at all, this being the root of all holiness. Now we cannot love God, till we know he loves us: 'we love him because he first loved us.' And we cannot know his love to us, till his Spirit witnesses it to our spirit. Since therefore the testimony of his Spirit must precede the love of God and all holiness, of consequence it must precede our consciousness thereof."

A doctrine so often misrepresented and misunderstood could not be so properly stated, as in Mr. Wes-

ley's own words; and as many, and those even professing to be sober Christians, have, principally with reference to this doctrine, frequently opened upon this venerable man the full cry of enthusiasm and fanatical delusion, it may be proper to add a few explanatory and defensive remarks, and that not merely for the sake of justice to his opinions, but in support of a great doctrine of revelation, most intimately connected with the hope and comfort of man.

And, 1. The doctrine of assurance, as held by the founder of Methodism, was not the assurance of the *eternal* salvation as held by Calvinistic divines; but that persuasion which is given by the Holy Spirit to penitent and believing persons, that they are "*now* accepted of God, pardoned and adopted into God's family." It was an assurance, therefore, on the ground of which no relaxation of religious effort could be pleaded, and no unwatchfulness of spirit or irregularity of life allowed: for he taught, that only by the lively exercise of the same humble and obedient faith in the merits and intercession of Christ, this state of mind could be maintained, and it was made by him a motive (influential as our desire of inward peace can be influential) to vigilance and obedience.

2. This doctrine cannot be denied without disconnecting religion from peace of mind, and habitual consolation. For if it is the doctrine of the inspired records, and of all orthodox churches, that man is by nature prone to evil, and that in practice he violates that law under which as a creature he is placed, and is thereby exposed to punishment:—if also it is there stated, that an act of grace and pardon is promised on the conditions of repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ:—if that repentance implies consideration of our ways, a sense of the displeasure of Almighty God, contrition of heart, and consequently trouble and grief of mind, mixed, however, with hope, inspired by the promise of forgiveness, and which leads to earnest supplication for the actual pardon of sin so promised, it will follow from these premises, either, that forgiveness is not to be expected till after the termination of our course of probation, that is, in another life; and that, therefore, this trouble and apprehension of mind can only be assuaged by the hope we may have of a favorable final decision on our case:—or, that sin is, in the present life, forgiven as often as it is thus repented of, and as often as we exercise the required and specific acts of trust in the merits of our Saviour; but that this forgiveness of our sins is not in any way made known unto us; so that we are left, as to our feelings, in precisely the same state as if sin were not forgiven till after death, namely, in grief and trouble of mind, relieved only by hope:—or, that when sin is forgiven by the mercy of God through Christ, we are, by some means, assured of it, and peace and satisfaction of mind take the place of anxiety and fear.

The first of these conclusions is sufficiently disproved by the authority of Scripture, which exhibits justification as a blessing attainable in this life, and represents it as actually experienced by true believers. "Therefore being justified by faith," &c. "There is *now* no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus." "Whosoever believeth is justified from all things," &c. The quotations might be multiplied, but these are decisive. The notion, that though an act of forgiveness may take place, we are unable to ascertain a fact so important to us, is also irreconcilable with many texts in which the writers of the New Testament speak of an experience, not confined personally to themselves, or to those Christians who are endowed with spiritual gifts, but common to all Christians. "Being justified by faith we have *peace* with God." "We joy in God, by whom we have received the *reconciliation*." "Being reconciled unto God by the death of his Son." "We have not received the spirit of bondage again unto fear, but the Spirit of adoption whereby we cry, Abba, Father." To these may be added innumerable passages which express the comfort, the confidence, and the joy of Christians; their "friendship" with God; their "access" to him; their entire union and delightful intercourse with him; and their absolute confidence in the success of their prayers. All such passages are perfectly consistent with deep humility, and self-diffidence: but they are irreconcilable with a state of hostility between the parties, and with an unascertained, and only hoped-for, restoration of friendship and favor.

3. The services of the church of which Mr. Wesley was a minister, may be pleaded also in support of his opinions on this subject. Those services, though, with propriety, as being designed for the use, not of true Christians only, but of mixed congregations, they abound in acts of confession, and the expressions of spiritual grief, exhibit also this confidence and peace, as objects of earnest desire and hopeful anticipation, and as blessings attainable in the present life. We pray to be made "children by adoption and grace;" to be "relieved from the fear of punishment by the comfort of God's grace;" not to be "left comfortless, but that God, the King of Glory, would send to us the Holy Ghost to comfort us;" and that by the same Spirit having a right judgment in all things, "we may evermore rejoice in his holy comfort." In the prayer directed to be used for one troubled in mind or in conscience, we have also the following impressive petitions: "Break not the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax. Shut not up thy tender mercies in displeasure, but make him to hear of joy and gladness, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. Deliver him from the fear of the *enemy*, and *lift up the light of thy countenance upon him, and give him peace*." Now unless it be contended, that by these petitions we are directed to seek what we can never find, and always to follow that which we can never overtake, the church, in the spirit of the New Testament, assumes that the forgiveness of sins, and the relief of the sorrows of the penitent state, are attainable, with those consequent comforts and joys which can only arise from some assurance of mind, by whatever means, and in whatever degree communicated, that we have a *personal* interest in the general promise, and that *we* are reconciled to God by the death of his Son. For since the general promise is made to many who will never be benefitted by it, it cannot of itself be the ground of a settled religious peace of mind. As it is a promise of blessings to be *individually* experienced, unless I can have personal experience of them, it holds up to hope what can never come into fruition.*

* "Faith is not merely a speculative but a practical acknowledgment of Jesus as the Christ—an *effort and motion of the mind towards God:* when the sinner, convinced of sin, accepts with thankfulness the proffered terms of pardon, and in humble confidence applying individually to himself the benefit of the general atonement, in the elevated language of a venerable father of the church, drinks of the stream which flows from the Redeemer's side. The effect is, that in a little he is filled with that perfect love of God which casteth out fear—he cleaves to God with the entire affection of the soul. And from this active lively faith, overcoming the world, subduing carnal self, all those good works do necessarily spring, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."—*Bishop Horsley's Sermons.*

"The purchase, therefore, was paid at once, yet must be *severally reckoned* to every soul whom it shall benefit. If we have not a hand to take what Christ's hand doth either hold or offer, what is sufficient in him cannot be effectual to us. The spiritual hand, whereby we apprehend the sweet offer of our Saviour, is faith, which,

An assurance, therefore, that those sins which were felt to "be a burden intolerable" are forgiven, and that all ground of that apprehension of future punishment which causes the penitent to "*bewail* his manifold sins" is removed by restoration to the favor of the offended God, must be allowed, or nothing would be more incongruous and indeed impossible, than the comfort, the peace, the rejoicing of spirit, which, in the Scriptures, are attributed to believers. If, indeed, self-condemnation, and the apprehension of danger, had no foundation but in the imagination, the case would be totally altered. Where there is no danger, deliverance is visionary; and the joy it inspires is raving, and not reason. But if a real danger exists; and if we cannot escape it except by an act of grace on the part of Almighty God, we must have some evidence of his gracious interposition in our case, or the guilty gloom will abide upon us. The more sincere and earnest a person is in the affairs of his salvation, the more miserable he must become if there be no possibility of his knowing that the wrath of God no longer abideth upon him:—then the ways of wisdom would be no longer "ways of pleasantness, and paths of peace."

4. Few real Christians therefore have ever denied the possibility of our becoming so persuaded of the favor and good-will of God towards us as to produce substantial comfort to the mind; but they have differed in opinion as to the means by which this is acquired. Some have said that we obtain it by *inference*; others, by *the direct inward testimony* of the Holy Spirit. The latter, as we have seen, was the opinion of Mr. Wesley; but he never failed to connect this doctrine with another, which, on the authority of St. Paul, he calls "the witness of our own spirit,"—"the consciousness of having received, in and by the Spirit of adoption, the *tempers* mentioned in the word of God, as belonging to his adopted children—a consciousness that we are inwardly conformed, by the Spirit of God, to the image of his Son, and that we *walk* before him in justice, mercy, and truth, *doing* the things which are pleasing in his sight." These two testimonies he never put asunder, although he assigned them distinct offices; and this cannot be overlooked if justice be done to his opinions. In order to prevent presumption, he reminds his readers that the direct testimony of the Holy Spirit is subsequent to true repentance and faith; and on the other hand, to guard against delusion, he asks, "How am I assured that I do not mistake the voice of the Spirit? Even by the testimony of my own spirit, 'by the answer of a good conscience towards God.' Hereby you shall know that you are in no delusion, that you have not deceived your own soul. The immediate fruits of the Spirit ruling in the heart are love, joy, peace, bowels of mercies, humbleness of mind, meekness, gentleness, long-suffering. And the outward fruits are the doing good to all men, and a uniform obedience to all the commands of God." Where then is the enthusiasm of the doctrine as thus stated? An enthusiastic doctrine is unsupported by the sacred records; but in confirmation of this we read, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." Here the witnesses are the Spirit of God, and our own spirit; and the fact, to which the testimony is given, is, that "we are the children of God."—"And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father!" To these passages may be added all those texts which speak of the inward intercourse of the Spirit of God with believers; of his dwelling in them, and abiding with them as the source of comfort and peace; and which, therefore, imply the doctrine. Nor can such passages be interpreted otherwise than as teaching the doctrine of assurance, conveyed immediately to the mind of true believers by the Holy Spirit, without allowing such principles of construction as would render the sense of Scripture uncertain, and unsettle the evidence of some of the most important doctrines of our religion.

It is true that a more "sober" and "less dangerous" method, as it has been called, of obtaining a comfortable assurance of our justification before God has been insisted upon as equally consistent with the word of God; but, upon examination, it will be found delusive. This is what is termed a process of *inference*, and is thus explained. The question at issue is, "Am I a child of God?" The Scriptures declare that "as many as are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God." I inquire, then, whether I have the Spirit of God; and, in order to determine this, I examine whether I have "the fruits of the Spirit." Now "the fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, gentleness, goodness, meekness, faith, temperance;" and having sufficient evidence of the existence of these fruits, I conclude that I have the Spirit of God, and am, therefore, a pardoned and accepted child of God. This is the statement. But among these enumerated fruits of the Spirit we find *love*, *joy*, and *peace*, as well as gentleness, goodness, meekness, fidelity, and temperance; and if it be said that no man has a right to assume that "he is so led by the Spirit of God," as to conclude, that he is a child of God, who has only the affections of "peace and joy" to ground his confidence upon, we have as good a reason to affirm the same thing, if he has "meekness and temperance," without "love, and peace, and joy;"—the love, the peace, and the joy, being as much fruits of the Spirit as the moral qualities also enumerated.

But can "love," love to God as our *Father*; "peace," peace with God, as in a state of *friendship* with us; and "joy," "joy in God by whom we have received the *reconciliation*," exist at all without a previous or concomitant assurance of the divine forgiveness and favor? Surely nothing is so clear, that it is not possible to love God as a father and a friend, whilst he is still regarded as an offended sovereign and a vengeful judge; and that to feel a sense of his displeasure, and to be at "peace" with him, and to rejoice in him, are contradictions; and if so, the very ground of this inference, that we are in the divine favor, and adopted into his family, is taken away. This whole inferential process proceeds upon dividing the undivided fruit of the Spirit, for which we have assuredly no authority; nor indeed have we any reason to conclude that we have *that* gentleness, *that* goodness, *that* meekness, &c., which the apostle describes, should the "love, joy, and peace," which he places among the leading fruits of the Spirit, be wanting. If then the whole undivided fruit of the Spirit be taken as the medium of ascertaining the fact of our forgiveness and adoption, and if it is even absurd to suppose that we can love God, whilst yet we feel him to be angry with us; and that we can rejoice and have peace, whilst the fearful apprehensions of the consequences of

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in short, is no other than an affiance in the Mediator. Receive peace, and be happy: believe, and thou hast received. Thus it is that we have an interest in all that God hath promised, or Christ hath performed. Thus have we from God both forgiveness and love, the ground of all, whether peace or glory."—*Bishop Hall's Heaven upon Earth.*

"It is the property of saving faith, that it hath a force to appropriate and make Christ our own. Without this, a general remote belief would have been cold comfort. 'He loved *me*, and gave himself for *me*,' saith St. Paul. What saith St. Chrysostom? 'Did Christ die only for St. Paul? No. *Non excludit, sed appropriat*;' he excludes not others, but he will secure himself."—*Bishop Brownrigg's Sermon on Easter Day.*

unremitted sin are not removed from our minds, then the only ground of our "love, joy, and peace," is pardon, revealed and witnessed, directly and immediately, by the Spirit of adoption.*

The mind of Mr. Wesley was also too discriminating not to perceive, that, in the scheme of attaining assurance by inference from moral changes only, there was a total neglect of the offices explicitly ascribed to the Holy Spirit in the New Testament, and which, on this scheme, are unnecessary. These are clearly stated to be that of "*bearing witness*" with the spirits of believers, that they are the children of God; that of *the Spirit of adoption*, by which they call God *Father*, in the special sense in which it is correlative to that sonship which we obtain only by a justifying faith in Christ; and that of a *Comforter*, promised to the disciples to abide with them "for ever," that their "joy might be full."

Enough has been said on this subject to show that Mr. Wesley, on this doctrine, was neither rash nor inconsiderate, much less enthusiastic. It is grounded on no forced, no fanciful interpretation of Scripture; and it maintains, as of possible attainment one of the most important and richest comforts of the human mind. It leaves no doubt as to a question which, whilst problematical, must, if we are earnest in seeking our salvation, be fatal to our peace; it supposes an intercourse between God and the minds of good men, which is, surely in the full and genuine spirit of the Christian religion, eminently called the "ministration of the Spirit;" and it is, as taught by him, vitally connected with sober, practical piety. That, like the doctrine of justification by faith alone, it is capable of abuse, is very true. Many have perverted both the one and the other. Faith with some has been made a discharge from duty; and with respect to the direct witness of the Spirit, fancy has no doubt been taken, in some instances, for reality. But this could never legitimately follow from the holy preaching of the founder of Methodism.

His view of the doctrine is so opposed to license and real enthusiasm, to pride and self-sufficiency, that it can only be made to encourage them by so manifest a perversion, that it has never occurred except among those most ignorant of his writings. He never encouraged any to expect this grace but the truly penitent, and he prescribed to them "fruits meet for repentance." He believed that justification was always accompanied by a renewal of the heart, and as constantly taught, that the comfort "of the Holy Ghost" could remain the portion only of the humble and spiritual, and was uniformly and exclusively connected with a sanctifying and obedient faith. He saw that the fruits of the Spirit were "love, joy, peace," as well as "gentleness, goodness, meekness, and faith;" but he also taught that all who were not living under the constant influence of the latter would fatally deceive themselves by any pretensions to the former.

Such were the views of the first Methodists, on these important points, and such are the unchanged opinions of their successors to this day. They may be called *peculiarities*, because they differed in some respects from the same doctrines of justification, faith, assurance, and sanctification, when associated with various modifications of Calvinism; and although somewhat similar doctrines are found in many Arminian writers, yet in the theology of the Wesleys they derive life and vigor from the stronger views of the grace of God which were taught them by their Moravian and Calvinistic brethren.

No man more honestly sought truth than Mr. Wesley, and none more rigidly tried all systems by the law and the testimony. As to *authority* he was "a man of one book;" and whatever may be thought peculiar in his views, he drew from that source by the best application of his judgment.* He wanted not, however, authority of another kind for his leading opinions. On the article of justification he agreed with all the reformed churches; his notion of saving faith was substantially that of the divines of the best ages of the reformation, and of still earlier times; nor was his doctrine of the direct witness of the Spirit to our adoption one as to which

* The *precedence* of the direct witness of the Spirit of God to the indirect witness of our own, and the dependance of the latter upon the former, are very clearly stated by three divines of great authority; to whom I refer the rather, because many of their followers of the present day have become very obscure in their statements of this branch of Christian experience:

"St. Paul means that the Spirit of God gives such a testimony to us, that he being our guide and teacher, our spirit concludes our adoption of God to be certain. For our own mind, of itself, independent of the preceding testimony of the Spirit, [*nisi præeunte Spiritus testimonio,*] could not produce this persuasion in us. For whilst the Spirit witnesses that we are the sons of God, he at the same time inspires this confidence into our minds, that we are bold to call God our Father."—*Calvin on Romans* viii. 16.

"Romans viii. 16. 'The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits that we are the sons of God.' The witness which our own spirits do give unto our adoption is the *work and effect* of the Holy Spirit in us; if it were not, it would be false, and not confirmed by the testimony of the Spirit himself, who is the Spirit of truth. 'And none knoweth the things of God but the Spirit of God.'—1 Cor. ii. 11. If he declare not our sonship in us and to us, we cannot know it. How doth he then bear witness to our spirits? What is the distinct testimony? It must be some such act of his as evidenceth itself to be from him, *immediately*, unto them that are concerned in it, that is, those unto whom it is given."—*Dr. Owen on the Spirit*, sect. 9.

"The Spirit of adoption doth not only excite us to call upon God as our Father, but it doth ascertain and assure us, as *before*, that we are his children. And this it doth not by an outward voice, as God the Father to Jesus Christ, nor by an angel, as to Daniel and the Virgin Mary, but by an inward and secret suggestion, whereby he raiseth our hearts to this persuasion, that God is our Father, and we are his children. *This is not the testimony of the graces and operations of the Spirit, but of the Spirit itself.*"—Poole on Romans viii. 16.

* The following beautiful and striking passage, illustrative of the above remark, is from the preface to his sermons:—

"To candid, reasonable men, I am not afraid to lay open what have been the inmost thoughts of my heart. I have thought, I am a creature of a day, passing through life, as an arrow through the air. I am a spirit come from God; and returning to God; just hovering over the great gulph; till, a few moments hence, I am no more seen! I drop into an unchangeable eternity! I want to know one thing, the way to heaven: how to land safe on that happy shore. God himself has condescended to teach the way; for this very end he came from heaven. He hath written it down in a book! O give me that book! At any price, give me the book of God! I have it: here is knowledge enough for me. Let me be *homo unius libri*. [A man of one book.] Here then I am, far from the busy ways of men. I sit down alone! only God is here. In his presence I open, I read his book; for this end, to find the way to heaven. Is there a doubt concerning the meaning of what I read? Does any thing appear dark and intricate? I lift up my heart to the Father of Lights.—Lord, is it not thy word, 'If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God.' Thou 'givest liberally and upbraidest not.' Thou hast said, 'If any be willing to do thy will, he shall know. I am willing to do; Let me know thy will. I then search after and consider paralled passages of Scripture, 'comparing spiritual things with spiritual. I meditate thereon with all the attention and earnestness of which my mind is capable. If any doubt still remain, I consult those who are experienced in the things of God; and then, the writings, whereby, being dead, they yet speak. And what I thus learn, that I teach."

any exclusive peculiarity could be attributed to him, except that he more largely and zealously preached it than any other man in modern times. It was the doctrine of Luther, Calvin, Beza, Arminius, and others of equally eminent rank abroad and at home. We may add also that such prelates and divines as Hooper, Andrews, Hall, Hooker, Usher, Brownrigg, Wake, Pearson, Barrow, Owen, and Poole, have expressed it in terms as explicit, and with equal deference to the testimony of the word of God.

The minutes of the early conferences are not confined to doctrinal discussions; but we see in them the frame of the discipline of the body; growing up from year to year, and embodied in many copious directions and arrangements. The most important of these remain in force to this day, although some in a maturer state of the society have gone into disuse. This discipline need not particularly be specified, as being for the most part well known and established; but a few miscellaneous particulars may be selected from the minutes of several successive years, as being in some instances of great importance, and in others characteristic, and occasionally amusing.

The duty of obeying bishops was considered at the very first conference of 1744; and the conclusion is, that this obedience extends only to things indifferent; a rather strict narrowing up of canonical obedience, at this early period.—The establishment of "a Seminary for laborers" was a subject of consideration at this conference also, but was postponed. The reasons why it was not afterwards carried into effect appear to have been, the rapid spread of the work, and the consequent demand for additional preachers. Mr. Wesley also looked to Kingswood school as subsidiary to this design. In the mean time he enjoined the study of the Greek and Latin poets and historians, as well as the original Scriptures, upon the preachers; and a large course of theological and general reading. This shows his views as to the subserviency of literature to usefulness in the ministry.*

No preaching was to be continued where societies were not raised up. It seems to have been a fixed maxim with the Wesleys, not to spend time in cultivating barren ground.—No band-ticket was to be given to the wearers of ruffles—a practice which, though then common, accorded not with their notions either of good taste, or of the duty of economizing money in order to charity.—Equal strictness was observed as to the dress of females. *Simplex munditiis* was Mr. Wesley's classical rule; and the exclusive "ornament of a meek and quiet spirit," his scriptural one.—All who married unbelievers were to be expelled from society.—The people were required not only to stand during singing, but whilst the text was read. This excellent custom now continues only in Ireland.—Dram-drinking and pawnbroking were also sins of exclusion: so that, in fact, the Methodist societies were the first temperance societies.—Reading was enjoined as a religious duty, and every preacher was bound to circulate every new book published or recommended by Mr. Wesley; so anxious was he to spread useful knowledge through society, and to improve at once the intellects and the hearts of his people.—The officers of the society are said to be "clergymen assistants, helpers, stewards, leaders of bands, leaders of classes, visiters of the sick, schoolmasters, and housekeepers." The last class will in the present day create a smile: but at that time their business was to reside in the houses built in several of the large towns, where both Mr. Wesley and the preachers took up their abode during their stay. They were elderly and pious women, who, being once invested with an official character, extended it sometimes from the *house* to the *church*, to the occasional annoyance of the preachers. As married preachers began to occupy the houses, they were at length dispensed with. Smuggling and the buying of uncustomed goods had frequent anathemas dealt out against them, and expulsion was the unmitigated penalty.—Respect of persons was strictly forbidden to the preachers, who were also enjoined to be easy of access to all. Every preacher was to promise rather to break a limb than to disappoint a congregation.—No preacher was to be continued who could not preach twice every day.—He was to take care that only suitable tunes should be sung; and was advised to use in public only hymns of prayer and praise, not those descriptive of states of mind.—Lemonade was to be taken after preaching, or candied orange-peel, or a little warm ale; but egg and wine, and late suppers, are denounced as downright poison. The views entertained of a call to the ministry, deserve quoting in full:—

"*Q.* How shall we try those who think they are moved by the Holy Ghost, and called of God to preach?

"*A.* Inquire, 1. Do they know God, as a pardoning God? Have they the love of God abiding in them? Do they desire and seek nothing but God? And are they holy in all manner of conversation?

"2. Have they *gifts* (as well as *grace*) for the work? Have they a clear, sound understanding? Have they a right judgment in the things of God? Have they a just conception of salvation by faith? And has God given them any degree of utterance? Do they speak justly, readily, clearly?

"3. Have they fruit? Are any truly convinced of sin, and converted to God, by their preaching?

"As long as these three marks concur in any, we believe he is called of God to preach."

The probation of the preachers was at first one year; but was afterwards extended to four.—The following minute of 1745 shows, that Mr. Charles Wesley was never considered as co-ordinate with his brother in the government of the societies:

"Should not my brother *follow* me step by step, and Mr. Meriton (another clergyman) him?

"*A.* As far as possible."

What Mr. Wesley was next to write, was a matter on which he asked the advice of the conference for several years.—A little stock of medicines, to be dispensed to the poor, was ordered to be provided for London, Bristol, and Newcastle. It is not generally known that Mr. Wesley pursued a course of regular medical study, whilst at Oxford. Preachers were cautioned against giving out long hymns; and were exhorted to choose the tunes, so that they might be suitable to the hymn.—Copies of the minutes of the conference were to be written out and given to each member present: when the number of preachers increased, printing was adopted.*—In

* As the subject of a seminary or college has been of late brought under discussion, it may not be uninteresting to those who have not access to the manuscript copies of the first minutes, extracts from which only are in print, to give the passages which relate to this subject from the complete minutes of 1744 and 1745. In the former year it is asked, "Can we have a seminary for laborers?" and the answer is, "If God spare us till another conference." The next year the subject was resumed, "Can we have a seminary for laborers yet?" Answer. "Not till God gives us a proper tutor." So that the institution was actually resolved upon, and delayed only by circumstances.

* Perhaps not more than one or two manuscript copies of the complete minutes of the conferences from 1744 to 1747 are in existence. That which lies before me, and from which extracts have been made in the preceding pages, wants two or three of the first pages of the minutes of 1744. It was not written by Mr. Wesley, but is a copy corrected by his own hand in different places.

1749, it seems to have been proposed that the societies every where should be considered *one*, of which the London society should be the mother church. This however came to nothing. The societies indeed were one, but the centre of union was first Mr. Wesley himself, then the conference of preachers. In the same year all chapels were directed to be built after the model of that of Rotherham, and the number of circuits, each very extensive, had increased to twenty-two.—Regular funds for the support of the preachers, and for aiding worn-out preachers began now to be established. A regular settlement of the chapels upon trustees had been enjoined in 1749; and in 1765, a person was appointed to be sent through England to survey the deeds, and supply wanting trustees. All chapel windows were to be sashed; no "tub pulpits" were to be allowed; and men and women were every where to sit apart;—The societies are warned against *little oaths*, such as "my life," "my honor," &c., and against "compliments," and unmeaning words. In general, many are reproved for *talking* too much, and *reading* too little.—In 1776, all octagon chapels are directed to be built like that at Yarm; and all square ones like that at Scarborough.—No Chinese paling was to be set up before any chapel; and the people are forbidden to crowd into the preacher's houses, as though they were coffee-houses.—No leaders' meeting was to be held without the presence of a preacher, and the spirit of debating at all meetings was to be strictly guarded against.—If bankrupts did not pay their debts when they are able, they were to be excluded the society. Sluts were to be kept out of the preacher's houses, and cleanliness was held to be next to godliness.

Thus to a number of little things among many greater and weightier matters, the active mind, the taste, and the orderly habits, of the founder of Methodism applied itself. Every thing was, however, kind and bland in his manner of injunction; and when he was disappointed as to the exact observance of his regulations, his displeasure was admirably proportioned to the weight of the case. No man generally knew better how to estimate the relative importance of things, and to give each its proper place and rank, although it would be to deny to him the infirmity of human nature to suppose that this rule of proportion was always observed. If little things were by him sometimes made great; this praise, however, he had without abatement, that he never made great things little.

The notices of the deaths of the preachers year by year in the early minutes, all bear the impress of the brevity and point of Mr. Wesley's style. The first time that the regular question, "What preachers have died this year?" appears, is in the minutes of 1777. A few sketches of character from this laconic obituary in different years, will illustrate his manner of keeping these annual records:—

"Thomas Hosking, a young man, just entering on the work; zealous, active, and of an unblamable behavior. And Richard Burke, a man of faith and patience, made perfect through sufferings: one who joined the wisdom and calmness of age, with the simplicity of childhood."

"Richard Boardman, a pious, good-natured, sensible man, greatly beloved of all that knew him. He was one of the two first that freely offered themselves to the service of our brethren in America. He died of an apoplectic fit, and preached the night before his death. It seems he might have been eminently useful, but good is the will of the Lord."

"Robert Swindells had been with us above forty years. He was an Israelite indeed. In all those years I never knew him to speak a word which he did not mean; and he always spoke the truth in love; I believe, no one ever heard him speak an unkind word. He went through exquisite pain (by the stone) for many years; but he was not weary. He was still

'Patient in bearing ill, and doing well.'

"One thing he had almost peculiar to himself; he had no enemy! So remarkably was that word fulfilled, 'Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy.'

"James Barry was for many years a faithful laborer in our Lord's vineyard. And as he labored much, so he suffered much; but with unwearied patience. In his death he suffered nothing, stealing quietly away in a kind of lethargy.

"Thomas Payne was a bold soldier of Jesus Christ. His temper was uncommonly vehement: but before he went hence, all that vehemence was gone, and the lion was become a lamb. He went away in the full triumph of faith, praising God with his latest breath.

"Robert Naylor, a zealous, active young man, was caught away by a fever in the strength of his years. But it was in a good hour; for he returned to him whom his soul loved, in the full assurance of faith.

"A fall from his horse, which was at first thought of little consequence, occasioned the death of John Livermore; a plain, honest man, much devoted to God, and determined to live and die in the best of services."

"John Prickard, a man thoroughly devoted to God, and an eminent pattern of holiness: and Jacob Rowell, a faithful old soldier, fairly worn out in his master's service."

"Thomas Mitchell, an old soldier of Jesus Christ."

"John Fletcher, [Vicar of Madeley,] a pattern of all holiness, scarce to be paralleled in a century; and J. Peacock, young in years, but old in grace; a pattern of all holiness, full of faith, and love, and zeal for God.

"Jeremiah Robertshaw, who was a good soldier of Jesus Christ, fairly worn out in his master's service. He was a pattern of patience for many years, laboring under sharp and almost continual pain, of meekness and gentleness to all men, and of simplicity and godly sincerity.

"Joshua Keighly, who was a young man deeply devoted to God, and greatly beloved by all that knew him. He was

"About the marriage state to prove,
But death had swifter wings than love."

"Charles Wesley, who, after spending four score years with much sorrow and pain, quietly retired into Abraham's bosom. He had no disease; but after a gradual decay of some months,

'The weary wheels of life stood still at last.'

His least praise was, his talent for poetry; although Dr. Watts did not scruple to say, that 'that single poem, *Wrestling Jacob*, was worth all the verses he himself had written.'

"John Maylay, worn out in the service of his master: he suffered much in his last illness, and died triumphant in the Lord."

Thus neither his brother Charles, nor Mr. Fletcher, had a longer eulogy than any other preacher:—so great was Mr. Wesley's love of brevity.

The "care of the churches" now had come upon him, and was increasing; he had a responsibility to man as well as to God, for the right management of a people whom his labors and those of his coadjutors had formed into a body distinct from the national church, and indeed, as to all ecclesiastical control, separate from it, although, in part, the

This is mentioned, as several of the extracts will be new even to some of the senior preachers.

members were attendants on her services. He was most anxious that this people should be raised to the highest state of religious and moral excellence; that they should be exemplary in all the relations of life, civil and domestic; wise in the Scriptures; well read in useful books: self-denying in their conduct, almost to severity; and liberal in their charities, in order to which they were enjoined to abstain from all unnecessary indulgences, and to be plain and frugal in dress. They were expected to rise early to a religious service at five o'clock, and to attend some evening service, if possible, several times in the week; and, beside their own Sabbath meetings, to be punctual in observing the services of the church. They were to add to all this the most zealous efforts to do good to the bodies and souls of those who were around them; and to persevere in all these things with an ardor and an unweariedness equal to his own. With these great objects so strongly impressed upon his mind, that he should feel compelled to superintend every part of the system he had put into operation, and attend to every thing great or little which he conceived to retard or accelerate its motion, was the natural consequence, and became with him matter of imperative conscience. A nobler object man could not propose to himself, than thus to spread the truth and the example of a living and practical Christianity through the land, and to revive the spirit of piety in a fallen church, and among a neglected people; and he had sufficient proofs from the wonderful success which had followed; success, too, of the most unequivocal kind, because the hearts of "multitudes had been turned to the Lord," that he was in the path of duty, and that the work was of God; but the standard which he set up in his own mind, and in his rules, both for his preachers and people, was so high, that, in the midst of all those refreshing joys which the review of the work often brought, feelings of disappointment, and something like vexation, occasionally break forth in the minutes of his conferences. On the preachers in their circuits an activity, an occupation of time, and an attention to various duties, had been enjoined, similar to his own; but the regulations under which they were placed, were often minute, and in minor matters they were often failing, even when in other respects they most faithfully and laboriously fulfilled their ministry. Stewards, leaders, and trustees, come in also occasionally for their share of remonstrance and rebuke on account of inattention; whilst the societies, as being exposed to the various errors of the day, and to the ordinary influences of the temptations of an earthly state, sometimes declined, and then again revived; in some places were negligent, and in others were almost every thing he could wish them to be, so that he could say with an apostle respecting them, "Great is my glorying." To Mr. Wesley's frequent trials of patience were to be added the controversies, often very illiberal, in which he was engaged, and the constant misrepresentations and persecutions to which he and the societies were for many years exposed. When all these things are considered, and when it is also recollected how much every man who himself works by a strict method is apt to be affected by the irregularities and carelessness of others; the full and tranquil flow of his zeal and energy, and the temper, at once so strict and so mild, which breathes in the minutes of the conferences, place him in a very admirable point of light. Vexation and disappointment passed over his serene mind like the light clouds over the bright summer field. The principle of an entire devotedness to serve God, and "his generation according to the will of God," in him never relaxed; and the words of one of his own beautiful hymns, to which in advanced life, in a conversation with a friend, he once alluded, as expressing his own past and habitual experience, were in him finely realized:—

"Jesus confirm my heart's desire,
To work, and speak, and think for thee;
Still let me guard the holy fire,
And still stir up thy gift in me.

"Ready for all thy perfect will,
My acts of faith and love repeat,
Till death thy endless mercies seal,
And make the sacrifice complete."

CHAPTER X.

The doctrines and principal branches of the discipline of the body being generally settled, Mr. Wesley desisted from publishing extracts from the minutes of the annual conferences from 1749 to 1765. In the minutes of the latter year we find for the first time a published list of the circuits, and of the preachers.* The circuits were then *twenty-five* in England, extending from Cornwall to Newcastle-upon-Tyne; in Scotland *four;* in Wales *two;* in Ireland *eight;* in all *thirty-nine.* The total number of the preachers, given up entirely to the work, and acting under Mr. Wesley's direction, had then risen to *ninety-two.* But it will be necessary to look back upon the labors of the two brothers during this interval. Instead, however, of tracing Mr. Wesley's journeys into various parts of the kingdom in detail from his journals, which present one uniform and unwearied activity in his high calling, it will be sufficient to notice the principal incidents.

Mr. Charles Wesley married in 1749, yet still continued his labors with but little abatement. He was in London at the time of the earthquake, and was preaching at the Foundry early in the morning when the second shock occurred. The entry in his journal presents him in a sublime attitude, and may be given as an instance of what may be truly called the majesty of faith: "March 8th, 1750. This morning, a quarter after five, we had another shock of an earthquake far more violent than that of February 8th. I was just repeating my text, when it shook the Foundry so violently, that we all expected it to fall on our heads. A great cry followed from the women and children. I immediately called out, 'Therefore we will not fear, though the earth be moved, and the hills be carried into the midst of the sea; for the Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.' He filled my heart with faith, and my mouth with words, shaking their souls as well as their bodies. The earth moved westward, then eastward, then westward again, through all London and Westminster. It was a strong and jarring motion, attended with a rumbling noise like that of thunder. Many houses were much shaken, and some chimneys thrown down, but without any further hurt."†

The impression produced in London by this visitation is thus recorded in a letter from Mr. Briggs to Mr. John Wesley:—"This great city has been, for some days past, under terrible apprehensions of another earthquake. Yesterday, thousands fled out of town, it having been confidently asserted by a dragoon, that he had a revelation that great part of London, and Westminster especially, would be de-

* In the manuscript copy of the first minutes before mentioned, lists of circuits occasionally appear, as in 1746:—"How many circuits are there? *Answer.*—Seven. 1. London, including Surrey and Kent. 2. Bristol, including Somersetshire, Portland, Wiltshire, Oxfordshire, and Gloucestershire. 3. Cornwall. 4. Evesham, including Shrewsbury, Leominster, Hereford, Stroud, and Wednesbury. 5. York, including Yorkshire, Cheshire, Lancashire, Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, and Lincolnshire. 6. Newcastle. 7. Wales."

† Journal.

stroyed by an earthquake on the 4th instant, between twelve and one at night. The whole city was under direful apprehensions. Places of worship were crowded with frightened sinners, especially our two chapels, and the Tabernacle, where Mr. Whitefield preached. Several of the classes came to their leaders, and desired that they would spend the night with them in prayer; which was done, and God gave them a blessing. Indeed all around was awful. Being not at all convinced of the prophet's mission, and having no call from any of my brethren, I went to bed at my usual time, believing I was safe in the hands of Christ; and likewise, that, by doing so, I should be the more ready to rise to the preaching in the morning; which I did, praised be my kind Protector." In a postscript he adds, "Though crowds left the town on Wednesday night, yet crowds were left behind; multitudes of whom, for fear of being suddenly overwhelmed, left their houses, and repaired to the fields, and open places in the city. Tower Hill, Moorfields, but above all, Hyde Park, were filled, the best part of the night, with men, women, and children, lamenting. Some, with stronger imaginations than others, mostly women, ran crying in the streets, 'An earthquake! an earthquake!' Such distress, perhaps, is not recorded to have happened before in this careless city. Mr. Whitefield preached at midnight in Hyde Park. Surely God will visit this city; it will be a time of mercy to some. O may I be found watching!"*

So ready were these great preachers of the time to take advantage of every event by which they might lead men to God. One knows not which most to admire, Mr. Whitefield preaching at midnight in Hyde Park to a crowd of affrighted people, expecting the earth to swallow them up; or Mr. Charles Wesley, with the very ground reeling under him, calling out to the congregation, "Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be moved, and the hills be carried into the midst of the sea; for the Lord of Hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge;" and using this as his text.

The detected immorality and expulsion of one of the preachers, James Wheatley,† led the brothers to determine upon instituting a more strict inquiry into the life and behavior of every preacher in connection with them. Mr. Charles Wesley undertook that office, as being perhaps more confident in his own discernment of character, and less influenced by affection to the preachers. The result was, however, highly creditable to them, for no irregularity of conduct was detected; but as the visitation was not conducted, to say the least of it, in the bland manner in which it would have been executed by Mr. John Wesley, who was indeed alone regarded as the father of the connection, it led, as might be expected, to bickerings. Many of the preachers did not come up to Mr. Charles Wesley's notions of attachment to the church; some began to wish a little larger share in the government; and a few did not rise to his standard of ministerial abilities, although of this he judged only by report. From this time a stronger feeling of disunion between the preachers and him grew up, which ultimately led to his taking a much less active part in the affairs of the body, except to interfere occasionally with his advice, and in still later years, now and then to censure the increasing irregularity of his brother's proceedings. The fact was, Mr. John Wesley was only carried forward by the same stream which had impelled both the brothers irretrievably far beyond the line prescribed to regular churchmen; and Charles was chafing himself with the vain attempt to buffet back the tide, or at least to render it stationary. He saw, no doubt, during the visitation which he had lately undertaken, a growing tendency to separation from the church both among many of the preachers and the people, which, although it was the natural, nay, almost necessary, result of the circumstances in which they were placed, he somewhat uncandidly attributed to the ambition of the former; and, laying it down as a necessary qualification, that no preacher ought to be employed without giving some explicit pledge as to his purpose of adherence to the church, he attempted to associate himself with his brother in the management, with equal power to call preachers into the work, and then to govern them. He appears laudably to have wished to improve their talents; but he proposed also greatly to restrict their number, and to subject them to stricter tests as to their attachment to the establishment. Here began an important difference between the two brothers. Some impression was made upon the mind of Mr. John Wesley by his brother's letters written to him during his tour of inquisition, principally as they exaggerated the growing danger of separation from the church; and upon Charles' return to London, John was persuaded, although "with difficulty," to sign an agreement, engaging that no preacher should be called into the work except by both of them conjointly, nor any re-admitted but with mutual consent. The intention of Charles was evidently to obtain a controlling power over his brother's proceedings; but there was one great rule to which Mr. John Wesley was more steadily faithful. This was to carry on and extend that which he knew to be the work of God, without regarding probable future consequences of separation from the church after his death;* which was in fact the principle on which they had agreed at the first conference of 1744, and to which Charles stood pledged as fully as himself. It seems, therefore, that when Mr. John Wesley more fully discovered his brother's intention to restrict the number of preachers, under the plea of employing only men of superior abilities; and more especially after all that had passed between Charles and them during the inquisitorial visitation just named had been reported to him, he felt little disposed to assent to his having co-authority with himself in the management of the connection; and Charles withdrawing more from public life, the government remained with John still more exclusively than before. This *acquisition* of entire authority, as it has been called, has been referred to by one of Mr. Wesley's biographers as a proof of his ambition, and his inability to bear a rival. The affection of the brothers itself affords a strong presumption against the existence of any such jealousy between them: and besides, we find no previous instance of a single struggle for authority. But the fact was, that John always led the way, as sole director, with Charles as a confidential adviser; and they long acted together in this relation as with one soul. In the present case it was Charles only who grasped at a power which he had not previously possessed; and this was for a moment yield-

* Whitehead's Life.

† Mr. Wesley has been censured by some persons for sanctioning the publication of a pamphlet on the "Duties of Husbands and Wives," written, as they supposed, by this wretched man, and especially for doing this after the misconduct of the author had been brought to light. But the charge is without foundation. The pamphlet in question was not written by James Wheatley, the preacher, but by William Whateley, the puritan minister of Banbury; a man of the most exemplary piety, and one of the best practical writers of his age, who died in 1639. The work from which the pamphlet was extracted is entitled, "A Bride-Bush," and bears the date of 1619; which was at least a hundred years before Wheatley was born.

* "Church or no church," he observes in one of his letters to Charles, "we must attend to the work of saving souls." And in another, "I neither set it up, nor pull it down; but let you and I build the city of God."

ed, though hesitatingly, upon an *ex parte* statement, and under views not fully manifested. When, however, those were disclosed, John recoiled; and his brother, by a partial secession from the work, left the whole care of it upon his hands. Mr. Charles Wesley had indeed, some time before this, rather hastily interposed to prevent the marriage of his brother with a very pious and respectable woman, Mrs. Grace Murray, to whom he was attached, and that probably under the influence of a little family pride, as she was not in an elevated rank of life;* and this affair, in which there appears to have been somewhat of treachery, although no doubt well intended, had for the first time interrupted their harmony. But it is not at all likely that any feeling of resentment remained in the mind of John; and indeed the commission of visitation, with which Charles had been invested, was a sufficient proof that confidence had been restored. The true reason of the difference was, that the one wished to contract the work, from fear of the probable consequence of separation from the church; the other pursued his course of enlarging and extending it, resolving to prevent separation to the best of his power, but leaving that issue in higher hands. Still, however, the affection of the brothers remained unimpaired.

In the year 1751, as Mr. Wesley was still resolved to marry, believing that his usefulness would be thereby promoted, he took to wife Mrs. Vizelle, a widow lady of independent fortune. She was a woman of a cultivated understanding, as her remaining letters testify; and that she appeared to Mr. Wesley to possess every other qualification, which promised to increase both his usefulness and happiness, we may conclude from his having made choice of her as his companion. We must suppose, also, that as he never intended to relax his labors, and adopt a more settled mode of life, this matter also was fully understood, and agreed to before marriage. But whatever good qualities Mrs. Wesley might appear to have, they were at length wholly swallowed up in the fierce passion of jealousy. For some time she travelled with him; but becoming weary of this, and not being able to bind him down to a more domestic life, this passion increased. The violence of her temper broke out also against Mr. Charles Wesley and his wife. This arose from very trifling circumstances, magnified into personal slights; and various unpleasant scenes are mentioned in Mr. Charles Wesley's unpublished letters, and described with a sprightliness which, whilst it shows that he was unconscious of having given her any just cause of offence, equally indicates the absence of sympathy. Perhaps this had been worn out by the long continuance of her caustic attacks upon him and his family, both by word and by letter. Certainly Mr. Charles Wesley must have felt her to be an annoying correspondent, if we may judge from some of her letters still preserved, and in which, singular as it may appear, she zealously contends for her husband's superiority, and is indignant that he should be wearing himself out with excessive labor, whilst Charles was remaining at home in ease. Dr. Southey has candidly and justly stated the matter betweeen her and her persecuted husband:—

"Had Mrs. Wesley been capable of understanding her husband's character, she could not possibly have been jealous; but the spirit of jealousy possessed her, and drove her to the most unwarrantable actions. It is said that she frequently travelled a hundred miles for the purpose of watching, from a window, who was in the carriage with him when he entered a town. She searched his pockets, opened his letters, put his letters and papers into the hands of his enemies, in hopes that they might be made use of to blast his character, and sometimes laid violent hands upon him, and tore his hair. She frequently left his house, and, upon his earnest entreaties returned again; till, after having thus disquieted twenty years of his life, as far as it was possible for any domestic vexations to disquiet a man whose life was passed in loco-motion, she seized on part of his journals, and many other papers, which were never restored, and departed, leaving word that she never intended to return. He simply states the fact in his journal, saying that he knew not what the cause had been; and he briefly adds, *Non cam reliqui, non dimisi, non revocabo;* 'I did not forsake her, I did not dismiss her, I will not recall her.'"*

The worst part of Mrs. Wesley's conduct, and which only the supposition of a degree of insanity, excited by jealousy, can palliate, was that she interpolated several letters, which she had intercepted, so as to make them bear a bad construction: and as Mr. Wesley had always maintained a large correspondence with all classes of persons, and among others with pious females, in some of whose letters

* Mr. Charles Wesley and Mr. Whitefield got the lady hastily married to Mr. Bennett, one of the preachers, whilst his brother was at a distance, probably not being himself aware, any more than she, of the strength of his attachment. The following extract from one of Mr. Wesley's unpublished letters shows, however, that he deeply felt it:—"The sons of Zerniah were too strong for me. The whole world fought against me, but, above all, *my own familiar friend.* Then was the word fulfilled, 'Son of man, behold, I take from thee the desire of thine eyes at a stroke, yet shalt thou not lament, neither shall thy tears run down.' The fatal, irrecoverable stroke was struck on Thursday last. Yesterday I saw my friend, (that was,) and him to whom she is sacrificed. 'But why should a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?'" The following passages, from a letter of the venerable vicar of Shoreham to Mr. Charles, intimate how much he sympathised with Mr. John Wesley on the occasion, and how anxious he was to prevent a breach between the brothers, which this, certainly unbrotherly act, the only one into which Charles seems to have been betrayed, was near producing. The letter is dated, Shoreham, 1749:—"Yours came this day to hand. I leave you to guess how such news must affect a person whose very soul is one with yours, and our friend. Let me conjure you to soothe his sorrows. Pour nothing but oil and wine into his wounds. Indulge no views, no designs, but what tend to the honor of God, the promoting the kingdom of his dear Son, and the healing of our wounded friend. How would the Philistines rejoice could they hear that Saul and Jonathan were in danger from their own swords!"

I have seen an explanation of Mr. Charles Wesley's conduct in this affair by the late Miss Wesley; but as the matter occurred before her birth, I have much doubt as to her perfect knowledge of the circumstances, so that I shall not fully state it. She lays the fault chiefly on the lady's want of explicitness; states that she had formed a previous, but concealed, attachment to Mr. Bennett; and that Mr. Charles having discovered this, he hastened the marriage.

Whatever the ostensible reason might be, it was no doubt eagerly seized by Mr. Charles Wesley as an occasion of breaking off a match, which he appears some time before to have interfered with, influenced, it is most probable, by the consideration of Mrs. Murray's inferior rank. From this feeling Mr. John Wesley was much more exempt, as the following anecdote, found in one of Miss Wesley's letters, indicates in a way very creditable to his amiable temper:—"My brother Charles had an attachment in early youth to an amiable girl of inferior birth; this was much opposed by my mother and her family, who mentioned it with concern to my uncle. Finding from my father that this was the chief objection, my uncle only replied, 'Then there is no family blood? I hear the girl is good; but of no family.' 'Nor fortune either,' said my mother. He made no reply; but sent my brother a sum of money as a wedding present; and I believe sincerely regretted that he was ultimately crossed in his inclination.

* Southey's Life.

there were strong expressions of Christian affection, she availed herself of this means of defaming him. Some of these she read to different persons in private, and especially to Mr. Wesley's opponents and enemies, adding extempore passages in the same tone of voice, but taking care not to allow the letters themselves to be read by the auditors; and in one or two instances she published interpolated or forged letters in the public prints. How he conducted himself amidst these vexations, the following passages, in a letter from Miss Wesley to a friend, written a little before her death, will show. They are at once important as explanatory of the kind of annoyance to which this unhappy marriage subjected her uncle, and as containing an anecdote strongly illustrative of his character:—

"I think it was in the year 1775 my uncle promised to take me with him to Canterbury and Dover. About this time Mrs. Wesley had obtained some letters which she used to the most injurious purposes, misinterpreting spiritual expressions, and interpolating words. These she read to some Calvinists, and they were to be sent to the Morning Post. A Calvinist gentleman, who esteemed my father and uncle, came to the former, and told him that, for the sake of religion, the publication should be stopped, and Mr. John Wesley be allowed to answer for himself. As Mrs. Wesley had read, but did not show the letters to him, he had some doubts of their authenticity; and though they were addressed to Mr. John Wesley, they might be forgeries; at any rate he ought not to leave town at such a juncture, but clear the matter satisfactorily.

"My dear father, to whom the reputation of my uncle was far dearer than his own, immediately saw the importance of refutation, and set off to the Foundry to induce him to postpone his journey, while I, in my own mind, was lamenting such a disappointment, having anticipated it with all the impatience natural to my years. Never shall I forget the manner in which my father accosted my mother on his return home. 'My brother,' says he, 'is indeed an extraordinary man. I placed before him the importance of the character of a minister, the evil consequences which might result from his indifference to it; the cause of religion; stumbling-blocks cast in the way of the weak; and urged him by every relative and public motive to answer for himself, and stop the publication. His reply was, Brother, when I devoted to God my ease, my time, my life, did I except my reputation? No. Tell Sally I will take her to Canterbury to-morrow.'

"I ought to add, that the letters in question were satisfactorily proved to be mutilated, and no scandal resulted from his trust in God."

Some of these letters mutilated, interpolated, or forged by this unhappy woman, have got into different hands, and are still preserved. In the papers of the Wesley family, recently collected, there are, however, sufficient materials for a full explanation of the whole case in detail; but as Mr. Wesley himself spared it, no one will, I presume, ever farther disturb this unpleasant affair, unless some publication on the part of an enemy, for the sake of gain, or to gratify a party feeling, should render it necessary to defend the character of this holy and unsuspecting man.*

A school at Kingswood, near Bristol, for the children of the poor, had been long built: but that neighborhood was also fixed upon by Mr. Wesley for an institution, in which the sons of the preachers, and those of the richer Methodists, should receive at once the best education, and the most efficient religious training. It was opened in June, 1748, and he published soon after a "Short Account" of the institution, with the plan of education adopted, particularly for those who were to remain so long in it as to go through a course of academical learning; and adds, "Whoever carefully goes through this course will be a better scholar than nine in ten of the graduates at Oxford and Cambridge." In this great and good design he grasped at too much; and the school came in time to be confined to the sons of the preachers, and ceased, as at first, to receive boarders. Indeed, from the increase of the preachers' families, the school was rapidly filled, and required enlargement at different times; and finally, it was necessary to establish a second school at Woodhouse Grove, in Yorkshire. The circumstance of the preachers being so much from home, and removing every one or two years from their circuits, rendered an institution of this kind imperative; and, as it necessarily grew out of the system of itinerancy, it was cheerfully and liberally, though often inadequately, supported by private subscriptions, and a public annual collection throughout all the congregations. The most gratifying moral results have followed; and a useful and religious education has been secured to the sons of the preachers, many of whom, especially of late years, having afforded undeniable proofs of genuine conversion, and of a divine call to public labors in the church of Christ, have been admitted into the ministry, and are among its highest ornaments, or its brightest hopes. It is however to be regretted, that the original plan of Mr. Wesley, to found an institution for the connection at large, which should unite the advantages of a school and a college, has not been resumed in later and more favorable times. Various circumstances, at that early period, militated against the success of this excellent project, which have gradually disappeared; and if in that infant state of the cause, Mr. Wesley wisely thought that Methodism should provide for all its wants, religious and educational, within itself, much more incumbent is it to do so now. Many of the sons of our friends, for want of such a provision, have been

* The following passage, in a letter from Mr. Perronet to Mr. Charles Wesley, dated Shoreham, Nov. 3, 1752, shows that Mr. Wesley's matrimonial afflictions must have commenced a very short time after marriage: "I am truly concerned that matters are in so melancholy a situation. I think the unhappy lady is most to be pitied, though the gentleman's case is mournful enough. Their sufferings proceed from widely different causes. His are the visible chastisements of a loving Father. Her's the immediate effects of an angry, bitter spirit; and, indeed, it is a sad consideration, that, after so many months have elapsed, the same warmth and bitterness should remain." This truly venerable and holy man died in 1785, in the ninety-second year of his age. Two days before his death, his grand-daughter, Miss Briggs, who attended him day and night, read to him the three last chapters of Isaiah. He then desired her to go into the garden, to take a little fresh air. Upon her return, she found him in an ecstacy, with the tears running down his cheeks, from a deep and lively sense of the glorious things which she had just been reading to him; and which, he believed, would shortly be fulfilled in a still more glorious sense than heretofore. He continued unspeakably happy all that day. On Sunday, his happiness seemed even to increase, till he retired to rest. Miss Briggs then went into the room to see if any thing was wanting; and as she stood at the feet of the bed, he smiled and said, "God bless thee, my dear child, and all that belongs to thee! Yea, he will bless thee!" This he earnestly repeated till she left the room. When she went in the next morning, his happy spirit had returned to God!

Mr. Perronet, like those great and good men, Messrs Grimshaw and Fletcher, continued steadily attached to Mr. Wesley, and to the Methodists. He received the preachers joyfully, fitted up a room in the parsonage house for their use, and attended their ministry himself at every opportunity. His house was one of the regular places of the Kent circuit, and so continued to the day of his death. All his family were members of the society, and two of his sons preachers.

placed in schools where their religious principles have been neglected or perverted; and too often have been taught to ridicule, or to be ashamed of, the religious profession of their fathers.

In 1753, Mr. Wesley visited Scotland a second time, and preached at Glasgow to large congregations. He had gone there on the invitation of that excellent man, Dr. Gillies, minister of the college kirk, who, a few days after he left, wrote to him as follows:—"The singing of hymns here meets with greater opposition than I expected. Serious people are much divided. Those of better understanding and education are silent; but many others are so prejudiced, especially at the singing publicly, that they speak openly against it, and look upon me as led to do a very wrong or sinful thing. I beg your advice, whether to answer them only by continuing in the practice of the thing, with such as have freedom to join, looking to the Lord for a blessing upon his own ordinance: or, if I should publish a sheet of arguments from reason, and Scripture, and the example of the godly. Your experience of the most effectual way of dealing with people's prejudices, makes your advice on this head of the greater importance.

"I bless the Lord for the benefit and comfort of your acquaintance, for your important assistance in my historical collections, and for your edifying conversation and sermons in this place. May our gracious God prosper you wherever you are. O, my dear sir, pray for your brother, that I may be employed in doing something for the advancement of His glory, who has done so much for me, and who is my only hope."

This prejudice in favor of their own doggerel version of the Psalms of David, generally remains among the Scotch to this day; and even in the Wesleyan societies raised up there, great opposition was at first made to the use of hymns. The Historical Collections of Dr. Gillies, mentioned in his letter, do justice to that revival of religion in this country of which Methodism was the instrument, and gives many valuable accounts of similar revivals, and special effusions of the Holy Spirit upon the churches of Christ, in different ages.

The following extracts from two of Mr. Wesley's letters, written about this time, show how meekly this admirable man could take reproof; and with how patient a temper he could deal with peevish and complaining men.

"You give," says he, "five reasons why the Rev. Mr. P——— will come no more amongst us: I. 'Because we despise the ministers of the church of England.' This I flatly deny. I am answering letters this very post, which bitterly blame me for just the contrary 2. 'Because so much backbiting and evil speaking is suffered amongst our people.' It is not suffered; all possible means are used, both to prevent and remove it. 3. 'Because I, who have written so much against hoarding up money, have put out seven hundred pounds to interest.' I never put sixpence out to interest since I was born; nor had I ever one hundred pounds together, my own, since I came into the world. 4. 'Because our lay preachers have told many stories of my brother and me.' If they did, I am sorry for them; when I hear the particulars I can answer, and perhaps make those ashamed who believed them. 5. 'Because we did not help a friend in distress.' We did help him as far as we were able. 'But we might have made his case known to Mr. G———, Lady H———,' &c. So we did, more than once; but we could not pull money from them, whether they would or no. Therefore these reasons are of no weight. You conclude with praying, that God would remove pride and malice from amongst us. Of pride I have too much: of malice I have none: however, the prayer is good, and I thank you for it."

The other letter from which I shall give an extract, was written apparently to a gentleman of some rank and influence:—"I do not recollect, for I kept no copy of my last, that I charged you with want of humility or meekness. Doubtless these may be found in the most splendid palaces. But did they ever move a man to build a splendid palace? Upon what motive you did this, I know not; but you are to answer it to God, not to me.

"If your soul is as much alive to God, if your thirst after pardon and holiness is as strong, if you are as dead to the desire of the eye and the pride of life, as you were six or seven years ago, I rejoice; if not, I pray God you may; and then you will know how to value a real friend.

"With regard to myself, you do well to warn me against 'popularity, a thirst of power and of applause; against envy, producing a seeming contempt for the conveniences or grandeur of this life; against an affected humility; against sparing from myself to give to others, from no other motive than ostentation.' I am not conscious to myself, that this is my case. However, the warning is always friendly; and it is always seasonable, considering how deceitful my heart is, and how many the enemies that surround me.—What follows I do not understand:—'You behold me in the ditch, wherein you helped, though innocently, to cast me, and with a Levitical pity pass by on the other side. He and you, sir, have not any merit, though Providence should permit all these sufferings to work together for my good.'—I do not comprehend one line of this, and therefore cannot plead either guilty or not guilty. I presume, they are some that are dependant on me, who, you say, 'keep not the commandments of God; who show a repugnance to serve and obey, who are as full of pride and arrogance, as of filth and nastiness; who do not pay lawful debts, nor comply with civil obligations; who make the waiting on the offices of religion, a plea of sloth and idleness; who, after I had strongly recommended them, did not perform their moral duty, but increased the number of those incumbrances which they forced on you, against your will.'—To this I can only say, 1. I know not whom you mean; I am not certain that I can so much as guess at one of them. 2. Whoever they are, had they followed my instructions, they would have acted in a quite different manner. 3. If you will tell me them by name, I will renounce all fellowship with them."

In the autumn of 1753, Mr. Wesley was threatened with consumption, brought on by repeated attacks of cold. By the advice of Dr. Fothergill he retired to Lewisham; and here, not knowing how it might please God to dispose of him, and wishing "to prevent vile panegyric," in case of death, he wrote his epitaph as follows:—

HERE LIETH
THE BODY OF JOHN WESLEY,
A BRAND PLUCKED OUT OF THE BURNING;
WHO DIED OF A CONSUMPTION IN THE FIFTY-FIRST
YEAR OF HIS AGE.
NOT LEAVING, AFTER HIS DEBTS ARE PAID,
TEN POUNDS BEHIND HIM:
PRAYING
God be merciful to me an unprofitable servant!

He ordered, that this, if any inscription, should be placed on his tomb-stone.

During Mr. Wesley's illness, Mr. Whitefield wrote to him in a strain which shows the fulness of

affection which existed between those great and good men, notwithstanding their differences of opinion:—

"BRISTOL, Dec. 3, 1753.

"REV. AND VERY DEAR SIR,

"IF seeing you so weak when leaving London distressed me, the news and prospect of your approaching dissolution hath quite weighed me down. I pity myself and the church, but not you. A radiant throne awaits you, and ere long you will enter into your Master's joy. Yonder he stands with a massy crown, ready to put it on your head, amidst an admiring throng of saints and angels. I, poor I, that have been waiting for my dissolution these nineteen years, must be left behind to grovel here below! Well! this is my comfort: it cannot be long ere chariots will be sent even for worthless me. If prayers can detain them, even you, Rev. and very dear Sir, shall not leave us yet; but if the decree has gone forth, that you must now fall asleep in Jesus, may he kiss your soul away, and give you to die in the embraces of triumphant love! If in the land of the dying, I hope to pay my last respects to you next week. If not, Rev. and very dear Sir, F—a—r—e—w—e—ll; *Ego sequar, etsi non passibus æquis.** My heart is too big, tears trickle down too fast, and you are, I fear, too weak, for me to enlarge. Underneath you may there be Christ's everlasting arms! I commend you to his never failing mercy, and am,

"Rev. and very dear Sir,

"Your most affectionate sympathizing, and afflicted, younger brother in the gospel of our common Lord,

"G. WHITEFIELD."

From Lewisham he removed to the Hot Wells near Bristol; and, ever intent upon improving time, began his Notes on the New Testament. For some time after this, he appears to have remained in an invalid state. During his retirement at Paddington he read a work which made a forcible attack upon his prejudices as a churchman; and soon afterwards, another, which still farther shook the deference he had once been disposed to pay to ecclesiastical antiquity.

"In my hours of walking, I read Dr. Calamy's Abridgment of Mr. Baxter's life. What a scene is opened there! In spite of all my prejudices of education, I could not but see, that the poor nonconformists had been used without either justice or mercy; and that many of the protestant bishops of King Charles had neither more religion nor humanity than the popish bishops of Queen Mary."

"I read Mr. Baxter's history of the councils. It is utterly astonishing, and would be wholly incredible, but that his vouchers are beyond all exception. What a company of execrable wretches have they been, (one cannot justly give them a milder title,) who have, almost in every age since St. Cyprian, taken upon them to govern the church! How has one council been perpetually cursing another; and delivering all over to Satan, whether predecessors or contemporaries, who did not implicitly receive their determinations, though generally trifling, sometimes false, and frequently unintelligible, or self contradictory! Surely Mahometanism was let loose to reform the Christians! I know not but Constantinople has gained by the change."

During Mr. Wesley's illness, Mr. Charles Wesley went forth to visit the societies, and to supply his brother's place.

In 1755, at the conference held in Leeds, a subject which had been frequently stirring itself, was formally discussed:—

"The point on which we desired all the preachers to speak their minds at large, was, whether we ought to separate from the church. Whatever was advanced on one side or the other was seriously and calmly considered: and on the third day we were all fully agreed in that general conclusion, that, whether it was *lawful* or not, it was no ways *expedient*."

Part of the preachers were, without restraint, permitted to speak in favor of a measure which in former conferences would not have been listened to in the shape of discussion; and the conclusion was, that the question of lawfulness of separation was evaded, and the whole matter was reduced to "expediency." Of this conference we have no minutes; but where was Mr. Charles Wesley?* Mr. Charles Perronet and some others, for whom Mr. Wesley had great respect, were at this time urging him to make full provision for the spiritual wants of his people, as being in fact in a state of real and hopeless separation from the church; and he did some years afterwards so far relax, as to allow of preaching in church hours under certain circumstances, as, 1. When the minister was wicked; or held pernicious doctrine; 2. When the churches would not contain the population of a town; or where the church was distant. In that case he prescribed reading the psalms and lessons and part of the liturgy. And for this purpose, as well as for the use of the American societies, he published his abridgment of the Common Prayer under the title of the "Sunday Service of the Methodists."

In 1756 he printed an address to the clergy, plain, affectionate, and powerful; breathing at once the spirit of an apostle, and the feeling of a brother. Happy if that call had been heard! He might perhaps be influenced in this by a still lingering hope of a revival of the spirit of zeal and piety among the ministers of the established church; in which case that separation of his people from the church, which he began to foresee as otherwise inevitable, he thought might be prevented; and this he had undoubtedly much at heart. Under the same view it probably was that in 1764 he addressed a circular to all the serious clergy, whom he knew, inviting them to a closer co-operation in promoting the influence of religion in the land, without any sacrifice of opinion, and being still at liberty, as to outward order to remain "quite regular, or quite irregular, or partly regular and partly irregular." Of the thirty four clergymen addressed, only three returned any answer. This seems to have surprised both him and some of his biographers. The reason is, however, very obvious: Mr. Wesley did not propose to abandon his plan and his preachers, or to get the latter ordained and settled in curacies, as proposed a few years before by Mr. Walker, of Truro; and the matter had now obviously gone too far for the clergy to attach themselves to Methodism. They saw, with perhaps clearer eyes than Mr. Wesley's, that the Methodists could not now be embodied in the church; and that for them to co-operate directly with him, would only be to partake of his reproach, and to put difficulties in their own way, to which they had not the same call. A few clergymen, and but a few, still continued to give him, with fulness of heart, the right hand of fellowship, and to co-operate in some degree with him. Backward he could not go; but the forward career of still more extended usefulness was before him. From this time he gave up all hope of a formal connection with even the pious clergy. "They are," he ob-

*"I shall follow, though not with equal steps."

* Three years after, Mr. Wesley published twelve reasons against separation, all however of a prudential kind. To these Mr. Charles Wesley added his separate testimony; but as to *himself*, he adds that he thought it not *lawful*. Here then was another difference in the views of the brothers.

serves, "a rope of sand, and such they will continue; and he therefore set himself with deep seriousness to perpetuate the union of his preachers. At the conference of 1769, he read a paper, the object of which was to bind the preachers together by a closer tie, and to provide for the continuance of their union after his death. They were to engage solemnly to devote themselves to God, to preach the old Methodist doctrines, and to maintain the whole Methodist discipline; after Mr. Wesley's death they were to repair to London, and those who chose to act in concert were to draw up articles of agreement; whilst such as did not so agree were to be dismissed "in the most friendly way possible." They were then to choose a committee by vote, each of the members of which was to be moderator in his turn, and this committee was to enjoy Mr. Wesley's power of proposing preachers to be admitted or excluded, of appointing their stations for the ensuing year, and of fixing the time of the next conference. This appears to have been the first sketch of an ecclesiastical constitution for the body, and it mainly consisted in the entire delegation of the power which Mr. Wesley had always exercised, to a committee of preachers to be chosen by the rest when assembled in conference. The form of government he thus proposed was therefore a species of episcopacy to be exercised by a committee of three, five, or seven, as the case might be. Another and more eligible provision was subsequently made; but this sufficiently shows that Mr. Wesley had given up all hope of union with the church; and his efforts were henceforth directed merely to prevent any thing like formal separation, and the open renunciation of her communion, during his own life, by allowing his preachers to administer the sacraments.

About this time much prejudice was excited against Mr. Wesley in Scotland, by the republication of Hervey's Eleven Letters. He had three times visited this country; and preaching only upon the fundamental truths of Christianity, had been received with great affection. The societies had increased, and several of his preachers were stationed in different towns. Lady Frances Gardiner, the widow of Col. Gardiner, and other persons eminent for piety and rank, attended the Methodist ministry; but the publication of this wretched work caused a temporary odium. Hervey, who had been one of the little band at Oxford, became a Calvinist; and as his notions grew more rigid with age, so his former feelings of gratitude and friendship to Mr. Wesley were blunted. He had also fallen into the hands of Cudworth, a decided Antinomian, who "put in and out" of the letters "what he pleased." They were not, however, published until Hervey's death, and against his dying injunction. It is just to so excellent a man to record this fact; but the work was published in England, and republished, with a violent preface by Dr. Erskine, in Scotland; and among the Calvinists it produced the effect of inspiring great horror of Mr. Wesley as a most pestilent heretic, whom it was doing God service to abuse without measure or modesty. The feelings of Mr. Charles Wesley at this treatment of his brother may be gathered from the answer he returned upon being requested to write Hervey's epitaph:—

ON BEING DESIRED TO WRITE AN EPITAPH FOR MR. JAMES HERVEY.

"O'ER-REACHED, impelled by a sly Gnostick's art,
To stab his father, guide, and faithful friend,
Would pious Hervey act the accuser's part?
And *could* a life like his in malice end?

"No: by redeeming love the snare is broke
In death his rash ingratitude he blames;
Desires and *wills* the evil to revoke,
And dooms the unfinished libel to the flames.

"Who then for filthy gain betrayed his trust,
And showed a kinsman's fault in open light?
Let *him* adorn the monumental bust,—
Th' encomium fair in brass or marble write:

"Or if they need a nobler trophy raise,
As long as Theron and Aspasio live,
Let Madan or Romaine record his praise;
Enough that Wesley's brother can *forgive!*" *

The unfavorable impression made by Hervey's Letters, surcharged by Cudworth's Antinomian venom, was however, quickly effaced from all but the bigots; and with them, judging from Moncrief's Life of Erskine, it remains to this day. In his future visits to Scotland, Mr. Wesley was received with marks of the highest respect, and at Perth he had the freedom of the city handsomely conferred upon him.

CHAPTER XI.

METHODISM having begun to make some progress in America, in consequence of the emigration of some of the members of the society from England and Ireland, Mr. Wesley inquired of the preachers at the conference of 1769, whether any of them would embark in that service. Messrs. Boardman and Pilmoor, two excellent men, of good gifts, volunteered their services, and were sent to take the charge of the societies. From this time the work spread with great rapidity; more than twenty preachers had devoted themselves to it previously to the war of independence; and societies were raised up in Maryland, Virginia, New York, and Pennsylvania. During the war they still prosecuted their labors; though as several of them took the side of the mother country, they were exposed to danger. Others, with more discretion, held on their way in silence, speaking only of the things of God. The warm loyalty of Mr. Wesley led him to publish a pamphlet on the subject of the quarrel, entitled, "A calm address to the American colonies;" but the copies which were shipped for America were laid hold of by a friend, who suppressed them; so that the work remained unknown in the colonies until a considerable time afterwards. This was probably a fortunate incident for the infant cause. After the war had terminated, political views were of course laid aside, and Mr. Wesley made a provision for the government of his American societies, which will be subsequently adverted to. They became, of course, independent of British Methodism, but have most honorably preserved the doctrines, the general discipline, and

* Mr. Charles Wesley, however, afterwards wrote and published some verses upon Mr. Hervey's death, in which the kind recollections of old friendship are embodied, and the anticipations of a happy meeting in heaven are sweetly expressed. The following are the concluding stanzas:

"Father, to us vouchsafe thy grace,
Which brought our friend victorious through;
Let us his shining footsteps trace,
Let us his steadfast faith pursue;
Follow this follower of the Lamb,
And conquer all through Jesus' name.

"Free from the law of sin and death,
Free from the Antinomian heaven,
He led his Master's life beneath;
And, laboring for the rest of heaven,
By active love and watchful prayer,
He showed his heart already there.

"O might we all, like him, believe,
And keep the faith, and win the prize!
Father, prepare and then receive
Our hallowed spirits to the skies,
To chant with all our friends above,
Thy glorious everlasting love."

above all the spirit of the body. Great, and even astonishing, has been their success in that new and rising country, to the wide-spread settlements of which their plan of itinerancy was admirably adapted. The Methodists are become, as to numbers, the leading religious body of the union; and their annual increase is very great. In the last year it was thirty six thousand, making a total in their communion of one thousand nine hundred ministers, and four hundred and seventy-six thousand members, having, as stated in a recent statistical account published in the United States, upwards of two millions five hundred thousand of the population under their immediate influence. In the number of their ministers, members, and congregations, the Baptists nearly equal the Methodists; and these two bodies, both itinerant in their labors, have left all the other religious denominations far behind. It is also satisfactory to remark, that the leading preachers and members of the Methodist church in the United States appear to be looking forward with enlarged views, and with prudent regard, to the future, and to aim at the cultivation of learning in conjunction with piety. Several colleges have been from time to time established; and recently a university, for the education of the youth of the American connection, has been founded. The work in the United States has been distinguished by frequent and extraordinary revivals of religion, in which a signal effect has been produced upon the moral condition of large districts of country, and great numbers of people have been rapidly brought under a concern for their salvation. In the contemplation of results so vast, and in so few years, we may devoutly exclaim, "What hath God wrought!"

The mention of what are called revivals of religion in the United States may properly here lead us to notice, that, in Great Britain also, almost every Methodist society has at different times experienced some sudden and extraordinary increase of members, the result of what has been believed to be, and that not without good reason, a special effusion of divine influence upon the minds of men. Sometimes these effects have attended the preaching of eminently energetic preachers, but have often appeared where those stationed in the circuits have not been remarkably distinguished for energy or pathos. Sometimes they have followed the continued and earnest prayers of the people; at others they have come suddenly and unlooked for. The effects however have been, that the piety of the societies has been greatly quickened, and rendered more deep and active, and that their number has increased; and of the real conversion of many who have thus been wrought upon, often very suddenly, the best evidence has been afforded. To sudden conversions, as such, great objections have been indeed taken. For these, however, there is but little reason; for if we believe the testimony of Scripture, that the Spirit is not only given to the disciples of Christ, *after* they assume that character, but *in order to* their becoming such; that, according to the words of our Lord, this Spirit is sent "to convince the world of sin," to the end that they may believe in Christ; and that the gospel, faithfully and fully proclaimed by the ministers of Christ, is "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth," and is made so by the accompanying influence of the Holy Ghost; who shall prescribe a mode to divine operation? Who, if he believes in such an influence accompanying the truth, shall presume to say that when that truth is proposed, the attention of the careless shall be roused only by a gradual and slow process?—that the heart shall not be brought into a state of right feeling as to eternal concerns, but by a reiteration of means which we think most adapted to produce that effect?—that no influence on the mind is genuine and divine, if it operates not in a prescribed manner?—that the Holy Spirit shall not avail himself of the variety which exists in the mental constitutions of men, to effect his purposes of mercy by different methods?—and that the operations of grace shall not present, as well as those of nature, that beauteous variety which so much illustrates the glory of Him "who worketh all in all?" And further, who shall say, that even the peculiarities of men's natures shall not, in some instances, be set aside in the course of a divine and secret operation, which touching the springs of action, and opening the sources of feeling, gives an intensity of energy to the one, and a flow to the other, more eminently indicative of the finger of God in a work which his own glory, and the humility proper to man, require should be known and acknowledged as His work alone?—Assuredly there is nothing in the reason of the case to fix the manner of producing such effects to one rule, and nothing in Scripture. Instances of sudden conversion occur in the New Testament in sufficient number to warrant us to conclude, that this may be often the mode adopted by divine wisdom, and especially in a slumbering age, to arouse attention to long despised and neglected truths. The conversions at the day of Pentecost were sudden, and, for any thing that appears to the contrary, they were real; for the persons so influenced were thought worthy to be "added to the church." Nor was it by the miracle of tongues that the effect was produced. If miracles could have converted them, they had witnessed greater than even that glorious day exhibited.—The dead had been raised up in their sight, the earth had quaked beneath their feet, the sun had hid himself and made an untimely night, and Christ himself had arisen from a tomb sealed and watched. It was not by the impression of the miracle of tongues alone, but by that supervenient gracious influence which operated with the demonstrative sermon of Peter, after the miracle had excited the attention of his hearers, that they were "pricked in their hearts, and cried, men and brethren, what shall we do?"

The only true rule of judging of professed conversion is its fruits. The modes of it may vary from circumstances of which we are not the fit judges, and never shall be, until we know more of the mystic powers of mind, and of that intercourse which Almighty God, in his goodness, condescends to hold with it.

It is granted, however, that in such cases a spurious feeling has been often mixed up with these genuine visitations; that some ardent minds, when even sincere, have not sufficiently respected the rules of propriety in their acts of worship; that some religious deception has taken place: that some persons have confounded susceptibility of feeling with depth of grace; that censoriousness and spiritual pride have displaced that humility and charity which must exist wherever the influence of the Spirit of God is really present; and that, in some cases, a real fanaticism has sprung up, as in the case of George Bell and his followers in London, at an early period of Methodism. But these are accidents—tares sown in the field among the good seed, which were never spared by Mr. Wesley or his most judicious successors. In the early stages of their growth indeed, and before they assumed a decided character, they were careful lest, by plucking them up, they should root out the good seed also, but both in Great Britain and in America, no extravagance has ever been encouraged by the authorities of either society, and no importance is attached to any thing but the genuine fruits of conversion.

In the early part of 1770, we find Mr. Wesley, as usual, prosecuting his indefatigable labors in different parts of the kingdom, and every where diffusing

the influence of spirituality and zeal, and the light of a "sound doctrine." His journals present a picture of unwearied exertion, such as was perhaps never before exhibited, and in themselves they form ample volumes, of great interest, not only as a record of his astonishing and successful labors, but from their miscellaneous and almost uniformly instructive character. Now he is seen braving the storms and tempests in his journeys, fearless of the snows of winter, and the heats of summer; then, with a deep susceptibility of all that is beautiful and grand in nature, recording the pleasures produced by a smiling landscape, or by mountain scenery:—Here turning aside to view some curious object of nature; there some splendid mansion of the great; showing at the same time in his pious and often elegant, though brief reflections, with what skill he made all things contribute to devotion and cheerfulness. Again, we trace him into his proper work, preaching in crowded chapels, or to multitudes collected in the most public resorts in towns, or in the most picturesque places of their vicinity. Now he is seen by the side of the sick and dying, and then, surrounded with his societies, uttering his pastoral advices. An interesting and instructive letter frequently occurs; then a jet of playful and good humored wit upon his persecutors, or the stupidity of his casual hearers; occasionally, in spite of the philosophers, an apparition story is given as he heard it, and of which his readers are left to judge; and often we meet with a grateful record of providential escapes, from the falls of his horses, or from the violence of mobs. Notices of books also appear, which are often exceedingly just and striking; always short and characteristic; and as he read much on his journeys, they are very frequent. A few of these notices, in his journal of this year, taken without selection, may be given as a specimen:—

"I read, with all the attention I was master of, Mr. Hutchinson's Life, and Mr. Spearman's Index to his Works. And I was more convinced than ever, 1. That he had not the least conception, much less experience, of inward religion: 2. That an ingenious man may prove just what he pleases, by well-devised scriptural etymologies: especially if he be in the fashion, if he affect to read the Hebrew without vowels: and, 3. That his whole hypothesis, philosophical and theological, is unsupported by any solid proof.

"I sat down to read and seriously consider some of the writings of Baron Swedenborg. I began with huge prejudice in his favor, knowing him to be a pious man, one of a strong understanding, of much learning, and one who thoroughly believed himself. But I could not hold out long. Any one of his visions puts his real character out of doubt. He is one of the most ingenious, lively, entertaining madmen that ever set pen to paper. But his waking dreams are so wild, so far remote both from Scripture and common sense, that one might as easily swallow the stories of Tom Thumb, or Jack the Giant-killer.

"I met with an ingenious book, the late Lord Lyttleton's 'Dialogues of the Dead.' A great part of it I could heartily subscribe to, though not to every word. I believe Madam Guion was in several mistakes, speculative and practical too; yet I would no more dare to call her, than her friend Archbishop Fenelon, 'a distracted enthusiast.' She was undoubtedly a woman of a very uncommon understanding, and of excellent piety. Nor was she any more 'a lunatic,' than she was a 'heretic.'

"Another of this lively writer's assertions is, 'Martin has spawned a strange brood of fellows, called Methodists, Moravians, Hutchinsonians, who are madder than Jack was in his worst days.' I would ask any one who knows what good breeding means, Is this language for a nobleman or for a porter? But let the language be as it may, is the sentiment just? To say nothing of the Methodists, (although some of them too are not quite out of their senses,) could his lordship show me in England many more sensible men than Mr. Gambold and Mr. Okeley? And yet both of these were called Moravians. Or could he point out many men of stronger and deeper understanding than Dr. Horne and Mr. William Jones? (if he could pardon them for believing the Trinity!) And yet both of these are Hutchinsonians. What pity is it, that so ingenious a man, like many others gone before him, should pass so peremptory a sentence, in a cause which he does not understand! Indeed, how could he understand it? How much has he read upon the question? What sensible Methodist, Moravian, or Hutchinsonian, did he ever calmly converse with? What does he know of them, but from the caricatures drawn by Bishop Lavington, or Bishop Warburton? And did he ever give himself the trouble of reading the answers to those warm, lively men? Why should a good-natured and a thinking man thus condemn whole bodies of men by the lump? In this I can neither read the gentleman, the scholar, nor the Christian.

"I set out for London, and read over in the way that celebrated book, 'Martin Luther's Comment on the Epistle to the Galatians.' I was utterly ashamed. How have I esteemed this book, only because I had heard it so commended by others! or, at best, because I had read some excellent sentences, occasionally quoted from it! But what shall I say, now I judge for myself? now I see with my own eyes? Why, not only that the author makes nothing out, clears up not one considerable difficulty; that he is quite shallow in his remarks on many passages, and muddy and confused almost on all; but that he is deeply tinctured with mysticism throughout, and hence often dangerously wrong. To instance only in one or two points. How does he (almost in the words of Tauler) decry reason, right or wrong, as an irreconcilable enemy to the gospel of Christ? Whereas, what is reason (the faculty so called) but the power of apprehending, judging, and discoursing?—which power is no more to be condemned in the gross, than seeing, hearing, or feeling. Again, how blasphemously does he speak of good works and of the law of God; constantly coupling the law with sin, death, hell, or the devil; and teaching, that Christ delivers us from them all alike. Whereas it can no more be proved by Scripture, that Christ delivers us from the law of God, than that he delivers us from holiness or from heaven. Here (I apprehend) is the real spring of the grand error of the Moravians. They follow Luther, for better for worse. Hence their 'No works, no law, no commandment.' But who art thou that 'speakest evil of the law, and judgest the law?'

"I read over, and partly transcribed, Bishop Bull's 'Harmonia Apostolica.' The position with which he sets out is this, 'that all good works, and not faith alone, are the necessarily previous condition of justification,' or the forgiveness of our sins. But in the middle of the treatise he asserts, 'that faith alone is the condition of justification; for faith,' says he, 'referred to justification, means all inward and outward good works.' In the latter end he affirms, 'that there are two justifications: and that only inward good works necessarily precede the former, but both inward and outward the latter.'"

Mr. Wesley meant this brief but just analysis to be Bishop Bull's refutation, and it is sufficient.

"Looking for a book in our college library, I took down, by mistake, the works of Episcopius; which opening on an account of the Synod of Dort, I believed it might be useful to read it through. But

what a scene is here disclosed! I wonder not at the heavy curse of God, which so soon after fell on the church and nation. What a pity it is, that the holy Synod of Trent, and that of Dort, did not sit at the same time!—nearly allied as they were, not only as to the purity of doctrine, which each of them established, but also as to the spirit wherewith they acted;—if the latter did not exceed.

"Being in the Bodleian library, I lit on Mr. Calvin's account of the case of Michael Servetus; several of whose letters he occasionally inserts: wherein Servetus often declares in terms, 'I believe the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God.' Mr. Calvin, however, paints him such a monster as never was, an Arian, a blasphemer, and what not; besides, strewing over him his flowers of dog, devil, swine, and so on, which are the usual appellations he gives to his opponents. But still he utterly denies his being the cause of Servetus's death. 'No,' says he: 'I only advised our magistrates, as having a right to restrain heretics by the sword, to seize upon and try that arch-heretic. But after he was condemned, I said not one word about his execution!'"

The above may be taken as instances of his laconic reviews of books.

Mr. Wesley's defence of the power he exercised in the government of the Methodist societies may also here be given; observing, that it is easier, considering the circumstances in which he was placed, to carp at it, than to find a solid answer. Few men, it is true, have had so much power: but on the other hand, he could not have retained it in a perfectly voluntary society, had he not used it mildly and wisely, and with a perfectly disinterested and public spirit.

"What is that power? It is the power of admitting into and excluding from the societies under my care; of choosing and removing stewards; of receiving or not receiving helpers; of appointing them when, where, and how to help me, and of desiring any of them to confer with me when I see good. And as it was merely in obedience to the Providence of God, and for the good of the people, that I at first accepted this power, which I never sought; so it is on the same consideration, not for profit, honor, or pleasure, that I use it at this day.

"'But several gentlemen are offended at your having so much power.' I did not seek any part of it. But when it was come unawares, not daring to bury that talent, I used it to the best of my judgment. Yet I never was fond of it. I always did, and do now, bear it as my burden, the burden which God lays upon me; and therefore I dare not lay it down.

"But if you can tell me any one, or any five men, to whom I may transfer this burden, who can and will do just what I do now, I will heartily thank both them and you."*

This year, 1770, is memorable in the history of Methodism, for having given birth to a long and very ardent controversy on the doctrines of Calvinism. It took its rise from the publication of the minutes of the conference in which it was determined, that, in some particulars then pointed out, the preachers had "leaned too much to Calvinism." This is easily explained. Mr. Whitefield, and Howell Harris, the early coadjutors of the Wesleys, became Calvinists; but the affection which existed among this little band, was strong; and as they all agreed in preaching, what was at that time most needed, the doctrine of salvation by faith, "an agreement" was made at a very early period, between the Wesleys and Howell Harris, to forget all peculiarities of opinion as much as possible in their sermons, to use as far as they could, with a good conscience, the same phrases in expressing the points on which they substantially agreed, and to avoid controversy. Such an agreement shows the liberal feeling which existed among the parties; but it was not of a nature to be so rigidly kept as to give entire satisfaction. On these articles of peace, we find therefore, endorsed, at a subsequent period, in the hand writing of Mr. Charles Wesley, "vain agreement." Mr. Wesley's anxiety to maintain unity of effort as well as affection with Mr. Whitefield, led him also, in 1743, to concede to his Calvinistic views, as far as possible; and he appears not to have been disposed to deny, though he says he could not prove it, that some persons might be unconditionally elected to eternal glory; but not to the necessary exclusion of any other from salvation. And he was then "inclined to believe" that there is a state attainable in this life, "from which a man cannot finally fall." But he was subsequently convinced by the arguments of Mr. Thomas Walsh, that this was an error.* These considerations will account for the existence of what Mr. Wesley called "a leaning to Calvinism," both in himself, and among some of the preachers, and rendered a review of the case necessary.† Though the leaders had approached so near "the very edge of Calvinism" on one side, and "of Antinomianism" also, with safety, it was not to be wondered at that others should overstep the line. Besides, circumstances had greatly changed. A strong tide of Antinomianism had set in, and threatened great injury to practical godliness throughout the land. Dr. Southey attributes this to the natural tendency of Methodism; but here he shows himself only partially acquainted with the subject. The decline of religion among many of the dissenting churches had scattered the seeds of this heresy all around them, though not without calling forth a noble testimony against it from some of their ablest ministers; and when they began to feel the influence of the revival of piety in the last century, the tares sprung up with the plants of better quality. The Calvinism taught by Mr. Howell Harris, and Mr. Whitefield, was also perverted by many of their hearers to sanction the same error.—Several of the evangelical clergy, likewise, who had no immediate connection with Mr. Wesley, were Calvinists of the highest grade; and as their number increased, their incautious statements of the doctrines of grace and faith, carried beyond their own intentions, became more mischievous. To show, however, that Antinomianism can graft itself upon other stocks besides that of the Calvinistic decrees, it was found also among many

* Wesley's works.

* Mr. Walsh was received by Mr. Wesley as a preacher in 1750, and died in 1759. The following is Mr. Wesley's character of him:—"That blessed man sometimes preached in Irish, mostly in English; and wherever he preached, whether in English or Irish, the word was sharper than a two edged sword. So that I do not remember ever to have known any preacher, who, in so few years as he remained upon earth, was an instrument of converting so many sinners from the error of their ways. By violent straining of his voice, he contracted a true pulmonary consumption, which carried him off. O what a man to be snatched away in the strength of his years! Surely thy 'judgments are a great deep!'

"He was so thoroughly acquainted with the Bible, that if he was questioned concerning any Hebrew word in the Old, or any Greek word in the New Testament, he would tell, after a little pause, not only how often one or the other occurred in the Bible, but also what it meant in every place. Such a master of biblical knowledge I never knew before, and never expect to see again."

† Mr. Wesley's sermon on imputed righteousness is an instance of his anxiety to approach his Calvinistic brethren, in his modes of expression, as far as possible; and in this attempt he sometimes laid himself open to be misunderstood on both sides.

of the Moravians; and the Methodists did not escape. Wherever, indeed, the doctrine of justification by faith is preached, there is a danger, as St. Paul himself anticipated in his epistle to the Romans, lest perverse, vain, and evil minds should pervert it to licentiousness; heavenly as it is in authority, and pure in its influence, when rightly understood. In fact, there is no such exclusive connection between the more sober Calvinistic theories of predestination, and this great error, as some have supposed. It is too often met with, also, among those who hold the doctrine of general redemption; though it must be acknowledged, that, for the most part, such persons, at length, go over to predestinarian notions, as affording, at least, some collateral confirmation of the solifidian theory. That Calvinistic opinions, in their various forms, were at this time greatly revived and diffused, is certain. The religious excitement produced gave activity to theological inquiries; and speculative minds, especially those who had some taste for metaphysical discussions, were soon entangled in questions of predestination, prescience, necessity, and human freedom. The views of Calvin on these subjects were also held by many, who, connecting them with vital and saving truths, were honored with great usefulness; and as the Wesleyan societies were often involved in these discussions, and in danger of having their faith unsettled, and their practical piety injured by those in whom Calvinism had begun to luxuriate into the ease and carelessness of Antinomian license, no subject at that period more urgently required attention. For this reason, Mr. Wesley brought it before his conference of preachers. The withering effects of this delusion were also strongly pointed out in his sermons, and were afterwards still more powerfully depicted by the master pencil of Mr. Fletcher, in those great works to which he now began to apply himself, in order to stem the torrent. Dr. Southey has fallen into the error of imagining that Mr. Fletcher's descriptions of the ravages of Antinomianism were drawn from its effects upon the Wesleyan societies; but that mistake arose from his not adverting to the circumstance, that neither Mr. Wesley nor Mr. Fletcher confined their cares to these societies, but kept an equally watchful eye upon the state of religion in the land at large, and consequently in the church of which they were ministers. The societies under Mr. Wesley's charge were indeed at no time more than very partially affected by this form of error. Still, in some places they had suffered, and in all were exposed to danger; and as Mr. Wesley regarded them, not only as a people given to him by God to preserve from error, but to engage to bear a zealous and steadfast testimony "against the evils of the time;" in every place, he endeavored to prepare them for their warfare, by instructing them fully in the questions at issue.

The minutes of 1770 contained, therefore, the following passages:—

"We said, in 1744, 'We have leaned too much toward Calvanism.' Wherein?

"1. With regard to man's faithfulness. Our Lord himself taught us to use the expression. And we ought never to be ashamed of it. We ought steadily to assert, on his authority, that if a man is not 'faithful in the unrighteous mammon,' God will not give 'him the true riches.'

"2. With regard to 'working for life.' This also our Lord has expressly commanded us. 'Labor,' ἐργάζεσθε, literally, 'work for the meat that endureth to everlasting life.' And in fact, every believer, till he comes to glory, works *for* as well as *from* life.

"3. We have received it as a maxim, that 'a man is to do nothing in order to justification.' Nothing can be more false. Whoever desires to find favor with God should 'cease from evil, and learn to do well.' Whoever repents should do 'works meet for repentance.' And if this is not in order to find favor, what does he do them for?

"Review the whole affair.

"1. Who of us is *now* accepted of God?

"He that now believes in Christ, with a loving and obedient heart.

"2. But who among those that never heard of Christ?

"He that feareth God and worketh righteousness, according to the light he has.

"3. Is this the same with 'he that is sincere?'

"Nearly, if not quite.

"4. Is not this 'salvation by works?'

"Not by the *merit* of works, but by works as a *condition.*

"5. What have we then been disputing about for these thirty years?

"I am afraid, about words.

"6. The grand objection to one of the preceding propositions is drawn from the matter of fact. God does in fact justify those who, by their own confession, neither feared God nor wrought righteousness. Is this an exception to the general rule?

"It is a doubt, whether God makes any exception at all. But how are we sure, that the person in question never did fear God and work righteousness? His own saying so is not proof: for we know how all that are convinced of sin undervalue themselves in every respect.

"7. Does not talking of a justified or a sanctified *state* tend to mislead men? almost naturally leading them to trust in what was done in one moment? Whereas we are every hour and every moment pleasing or displeasing to God, 'according to our works;'—according to the whole of our inward tempers, and our outward behavior."

That these were passages calculated to awaken suspicion, and that they gave the appearance of inconsistency to Mr. Wesley's opinions, and indicated a tendency to run to one extreme, in order to avoid another—an error which Mr. Wesley more generally avoided than most men—cannot be denied. They, however, when fairly examined, expressed nothing but what was found in substance in the doctrinal conversations at the conferences from 1744 to 1747; but the sentiments were put in a stronger form, and were made to bear directly against the Antinomian opinions of the day. To "man's faithfulness" nothing surely could be reasonably objected; it is enjoined upon believers in the whole gospel, and might have been known by the objectors to have been always held by Mr. Wesley, but so as necessarily to imply a constant dependance upon the influence of the Holy Spirit. That the rewards of eternity are also to be distributed in higher or lower degrees according to the obedient works of believers, yet still on a principle of *grace*, is a doctrine held by divines of almost every class, and is confirmed by many passages of Scripture. To the Antinomian notion, that a man is to do nothing in order to justification, Mr. Wesley opposes the same sentiment which he held in 1744, that previously to justification, men must repent, and, if there be opportunity, do works meet for repentance; and when he asks, "if they do them not *in order* to justification, what do they do them for?"—these words are far enough from intimating that such works are meritorious, although they are capable of being misunderstood. Repentance is indeed a condition of justification, as well as faith, but indirectly and remotely—"Repent ye, and believe the gospel;" and seeing that Mr. Wesley, so expressly in the same page, shuts out the *merit* of works, no one could be justly offended with this statement (except as far as the phrase is concerned) who did not embrace some obvious form of practical error.

The doctrine of the acceptance of such heathens as "fear God and work righteousness," might be offensive to those who shut out all heathens, *as such* from the mercies of God—a tenet, however, which is not necessarily connected with Calvinism; and it ought not to have been objected to by others, unless Mr. Wesley had stated, as some of his opponents understood him to do, that "a heathen might be saved without a Saviour." No such thought was ever entertained by him, as Mr. Fletcher observes in his defence; for he held that whenever a heathen is accepted, it is merely through the merits of Christ, although it is in connection with "his fearing God, and working righteousness." "'But how comes he to see that God is to be feared, and that righteousness is his delight?' Because a beam of our Sun of righteousness shines in his darkness. All is therefore of grace; the light, the works of righteousness done by that light, and acceptance in consequence of them."*

But when the minutes went on to state that this shows that salvation is by works as a "*condition*, though not by the merit of works," the highest point of heresy was supposed to be reached. Yet from this charge, though it derived some color from a paradoxical mode of expression not to be commended, Mr. Fletcher brings off his friend unhurt:—

"Our church expresses herself more fully on this head in the Homily on Salvation, to which the article refers. 'St. Paul,' says she, 'declares nothing (necessary) on the behalf of man concerning his justification, but only a true and lively faith, and yet (N. B.) that faith does not shut out repentance, hope, love, (of desire when we are coming, love of delight when we are come,) dread, and the fear of God, to be joined with it in every man that is justified; but it shutteth them out from the office of justifying; so that they be all present together in him that is justified, yet they justify not all together.' This is agreeable to St. Peter's doctrine, maintained by Mr. Wesley. Only *faith in Christ* for Christians, and *faith in the light* of their dispensation for heathens, is necessary in order to acceptance. But though faith only justifies, yet it is never alone; for repentance, hope, love of desire, and the fear of God, necessarily accompany this faith, if it be living. Our church therefore is not at all against works proceeding from, or accompanying, faith in all its stages. She grants, that whether faith seeks or finds its object, whether it longs for or embraces it, it is still a lively, active, and working grace. She is only against the vain conceit that works have any hand in *meriting* justification or *purchasing* salvation, which is what Mr. Wesley likewise strongly opposes.

"If any still urge, 'I do not love the word condition,' I reply it is no wonder; since thousands so hate the thing, that they even choose to go to hell, rather than perform it. But let an old worthy divine, approved by all but Crisp's disciples, tell you what we mean by condition: 'An antecedent condition (says Mr. Flavel, in his Discourse of Errors) signifies no more than an act of ours, which, though it be neither perfect in any degree, nor in the least meritorious of the benefit conferred, nor performed in our own natural strength, is yet, according to the constitution of the covenant, required of us, in order to the blessings consequent thereupon, by virtue of the promise; and consequently, benefits and mercies granted in this order are and must be suspended by the donor, till it be performed.' Such a condition we affirm faith to be, with all that faith necessarily implies."†

The greatest stone of stumbling was, however, the remarks on *merit*:

"As to merit itself, of which we have been so dreadfully afraid: we are rewarded 'according to our works,' yea, 'because of our works.' How does this differ from, 'for the sake of our works?' And how differs this from *secundum merita operum*, 'as our works deserve?' Can you split this hair? I doubt I cannot."

"The outcry of "dreadful heresy" raised against him, particularly on this article, was the more uncandid, because by explaining the phrase *secundum merita operum*, to mean, *as our works deserve*, it was clear, especially taking the passage in connection with what he had previously stated, that he understood merit in that loose, and not perhaps always correct, sense in which it had often been used by several of the ancient fathers; and also that he was not speaking of our present justification, but of our final reward. But here Mr. Fletcher shall again be heard:—

"If Mr. Wesley meant, that we are saved by the *merit of works*, and not entirely by that of Christ, you might exclaim against his proposition as erroneous; and I would echo back your exclamation. But as he flatly denies it in those words, 'Not by the merit of works,' and has constantly asserted the contrary for above thirty years, we cannot, without monstrous injustice, fix that sense upon the word merit in this paragraph.

"Divesting himself of bigotry and party spirit, he generously acknowledges truth even when it is held forth by his adversaries: an instance of candor worthy of our imitation! He sees that God offers and gives his children, here on earth, particular rewards for particular instances of obedience. He knows that when a man is saved meritoriously by Christ, and *conditionally by* (or, if you please, *upon the terms of*) *the work of faith, the patience of hope, and the labor of love*, he shall particularly be rewarded in heaven for his works: and he observes, that the Scriptures steadily maintain, we are recompensed *according to our works*, yea, *because of our works.*

"The former of these assertions is plain from the parable of the talents, and from these words of our Lord, Matt. xvi. 27, 'The Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, and reward every man according to his works;' unbelievers according to the various degrees of demerit belonging to their evil works; (for some of them shall comparatively 'be beaten with few stripes;') and believers according to the various degrees of excellence found in their good works; 'for as one star differeth from another star in glory, so also is the resurrection of the 'righteous 'dead.'

"If we detach from the word *merit* the idea of 'obligation on God's part to bestow any thing upon creatures, who have a thousand times forfeited their comforts and existence'—if we take it in the sense we fix to it in a hundred cases; for instance this: 'A master may reward his scholars according to the *merit* of their exercises, or he may not: for the *merit* of the best exercise can never bind him to bestow a premium for it, unless he has promised it of his own accord'—if we take, I say, the word *merit* in this simple sense, it may be joined to the word *good works*, and bear an evangelical meaning.

"To be convinced of it, candid reader, consider, with Mr. Wesley, that 'God accepts and rewards no work but so far as it proceeds from his own grace through the Beloved.' Forget not that Christ's Spirit is the savor of each believer's salt, and that he puts excellence into the *good* works of his people, or else they could not be *good*. Remember, he is as much concerned in the good tempers, words, and actions, of his living members, as a tree is concerned in the sap, leaves, and fruit of the branches it bears, John xv. 5. Consider, I say, all this, and tell us whether it can reflect dishonor upon Christ and

* Fletcher's Works. † Ibid.

his grace, to affirm, that as his personal merit—the merit of his holy life and painful death—'opens the kingdom of heaven to all believers;' so the merit of those works which he enables his members to do, will determine the peculiar degrees of glory graciously allotted to each of them."*

Mr. Fletcher came forward to defend his venerable friend, on account of the great uproar which the Calvinistic party had raised against him upon the publication of these minutes. The countess of Huntingdon had taken serious alarm and offence; and the Rev. Walter Shirley, her brother and chaplain, had written a circular letter to all the serious clergy, and several others, inviting them to go in a body to the ensuing conference, and "insist upon a formal recantation of the said minutes, and, in case of refusal, to sign and publish their protest against them." Mr. Shirley and a few others accordingly attended the Bristol conference, where, says Mr. Wesley, "We had more preachers than usual in consequence of Mr. Shirley's circular letter. At ten on Thursday morning he came, with nine or ten of his friends: we conversed freely for about two hours; and I believe they were satisfied, that we were not such 'dreadful heretics' as they imagined, but were tolerably sound in the faith."

The meeting was creditable to each party. Mr. Wesley acknowledged that the minutes were "not sufficiently guarded." This must be felt by all; they were out of his usual manner of expressing himself, and he had said the same truths often in a clearer, and safer, and even stronger manner. He certainly did not mean to alter his previous opinions, or formally to adopt other terms in which to express them; and therefore to employ new modes of speaking, though for a temporary purpose, was not without danger, although they were capable of an innocent explanation. Even Mr. Fletcher confesses that the minutes wore "a new aspect;" and that at first they appeared to him "unguarded, if not erroneous." Mr. Wesley showed his candor in admitting the former; and to prevent all future misconstruction, he and the conference issued the following "Declaration," to which was appended a note from Mr. Shirley, acknowledging his mistake as to the meaning of the minutes:

BRISTOL, *August* 9, 1771.

"WHEREAS the doctrinal points in the minutes of a conference held in London, August 7, 1770, have been understood to favor 'justification by works:' now the Rev. John Wesley and others, assembled in conference, do declare, that we had no such meaning; and that we abhor the doctrine of 'justification by works,' as a most perilous and abominable doctrine. And as the said minutes are not sufficiently guarded in the way they are expressed, we hereby solemnly declare, in the sight of God, that we have no trust or confidence but in the alone *merits* of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ for justification or salvation, either in life, death, or the day of judgment. And though no one is a real Christian believer (and consequently cannot be saved) who doeth not good works, where there is time and opportunity; yet our works have no part in meriting or purchasing our justification, from first to last, either in whole or in part.

"Signed by the Rev. Mr. Wesley, and fifty-three preachers."†

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*Fletcher's Works.

†This affair is capable of more illustration than it has received from Mr. Wesley's biographers hitherto. Mr. Shirley's circular letter was naturally resented by Mr. Wesley, as being published before any explanations respecting the minutes had been asked from him their author; and also from its assuming that Mr. S. and the clergy who might obey his summons, had the right to come into the conference, and to demand a recantation. Mr. Shirley, therefore, soon found, that he must approach in a more brotherly manner, or that Mr. Wesley and the conference would have no intercourse with him. This led Lady Huntingdon and Mr. Shirley to address explanatory letters to Mr. Wesley. "As the method of proceeding, as well as the terms in which we had delivered ourselves," says Mr. Shirley, "was objected to by many as by no means proper, and in submission to the precept, 'Give no offence to Jew or Gentile, or to the church of God,' Lady Huntingdon and I wrote the following letters, which were delivered to Mr. Wesley the evening before the conference met." Lady Huntingdon says, "As you and your friends, and many others, have objected to the mode of the application to you in conference, as an arbitrary way of proceeding, we wish to retract what a more deliberate consideration might have prevented," &c. Mr. Shirley's letter acknowledges "that the circular was too hastily drawn up and improperly expressed; and therefore, for the offensive expressions in it we desire we may be hereby understood to make every suitable submission to you." On this explanation, Mr. Shirley and his friends were *invited* by Mr. Wesley, to come to the conference on the third day of its sitting. Mr. Shirley's published narrative thus proceeds—"To say the truth, I was pleased that the invitation came from Mr. Wesley, without any application made on our parts, that there might not be left the least room for censuring our proceedings as violent. On that day, therefore, I went thither, accompanied with the Rev. Mr. Glascot, the Rev. Mr. Owen, (two ministers officiating in Lady Huntingdon's chapels,) John Lloyd, Esq. of Bath; Mr. James Ireland, merchant of Bristol; Mr. Winter, and two students belonging to Lady Huntingdon's college.

"I shall only give you a brief detail of what passed, and rather the substance of what was spoken, than the exact words; omitting likewise many things of no great weight or consequence.

"After Mr. Wesley had prayed, I desired to know whether Lady Huntingdon's letter and mine to Mr. Wesley had been read to the conference. Being answered in the negative, I begged leave to read the copies of them, which was granted. I then said that I hoped the submission made was satisfactory to the gentlemen of the conference. This was admitted; but then it was urged, that as the offence given by the circular letter had been very public, so ought the letter of submission. I therefore readily consented to the publication of it, and have now fulfilled my promise. Mr. Wesley then stood up; the purport of his speech was a sketch of his ministry from his first setting out to the present time; with a view (as I understood) to prove that he had ever maintained justification by faith, and that there was nothing in the minutes contrary thereunto. He complained of ill treatment from many persons, that he apprehended had been under obligations to him; and said that the present opposition was not to the minutes, but to himself personally.—In answer I assured them in the most solemn manner, that, with respect to myself, my opposition was not to Mr. Wesley, or any particular person, but to the doctrines themselves.—And they were pleased thus far to give me credit.—I then proceeded to speak to the point; informed them of the great and general offence the minutes had given; that I had numerous protests and testimonies against them sent me from Scotland, and from various parts of these kingdoms; that it must seem very extraordinary indeed, if so many men of sense and learning should be mistaken, and that there was nothing really offensive in the plain natural import of the minutes; that I believed they themselves (whatever meaning they might have intended) would allow that the more obvious meaning was reprehensible; and, therefore, I recommended to them, nay, I begged, and entreated for the Lord's sake, that they would go as far as they could with a good conscience, in giving the world satisfaction. I said I hoped they would not take offence, (for I did not mean to give it,) at my proposing to them a declaration which I had drawn up, wishing that something at least analogous to it might be agreed to. I then took the liberty to read it; and Mr. Wesley, after he had made some (not very material) alterations in it, readily consented to sign it; in which he was followed by fifty-three of the preachers in connection with him; there being only one or two that were against it.

"Thus was this most important matter settled. But one of the preachers (namely, Mr. Thomas Olivers)

MR. SHIRLEY'S NOTE.

"Mr. Shirley's Christian respects wait on Mr. Wesley. The declaration agreed to in conference the 8th of August, 1771, has convinced Mr. Shirley he had mistaken the meaning of the doctrinal points in the minutes of the conference held in London, August 7, 1770; and hereby wishes to testify the full satisfaction he has in the said declaration, and his hearty concurrence and agreement with the same.

"Mr. Wesley is at full liberty to make what use he pleases of this.

"August 10, 1771."

Mr. Fletcher had entitled his defence of Mr. Wesley, "The first check to Antinomianism:" but he did not content himself with *evangelizing* the apparently *legal* minutes, and defending the doctrinal consistency and orthodoxy of Mr. Wesley. He incidentally discussed various other points of quinquarticular controversy; and he, as well as Mr. Wesley, was quickly assailed by a number of replies not couched in the most courteous style. Mr. Fletcher's skill and admirable temper so fully fitted him to conduct the dispute which had arisen, that Mr. Wesley left the contest chiefly to him, and calmly pursued his labors; and the whole issued in a series of publications, from the pen of the Vicar of Madeley, which, as a whole, can scarcely be too highly praised or valued.* While the language endures, they will effectually operate as checks to Antinomianism in every subtle form which it may assume; and present the pure and beautiful system of evangelical truth, as well guarded on the other hand against Pelagian self-sufficiency. The Rev. Augustus Toplady, Mr. (afterward Sir Richard) Hill, and his brother, the Rev. Rowland Hill, with the Rev. John Berridge, were his principal antagonists; but his learning, his acuteness, his brilliant talent at illustrating an argument, and, above all, the hallowed spirit in which he conducted the controversy, gave him a mighty superiority over his opponents; and although there will be a difference of opinion, according to the systems which different readers have adopted, as to the side on which the victory of *argument* remains, there can be none as to which bore away the prize of *temper*. Amidst the scurrilities and vulgar abuse of Mr. Toplady, otherwise an able writer, and a man of learning, and the coarse virulence or buffoonery of the Hills and Berridge,† it is refreshing to remark, in the writings of "the saintly Fletcher," so fine a union of strength and meekness; an edge so keen, and yet so smooth, and a heart kept in such perfect charity with his assailants, and so intent upon establishing truth, not for victory, but for salvation.

In this dispute, Mr. Wesley wrote but little, and that chiefly in defence of his own consistency, in reply to Mr. Hill. His pamphlets also are models of temper, logical and calm, but occasionally powerfully reproving; not so much as feeling that he had received abuse and insult, as holding it his duty to bring the aggressor to a due sense of his own misdoings. The conclusion of his first reply to Mr. Hill is a strong illustration:—

"Having now answered the queries you proposed, suffer me, sir, to propose one to you; the same which a gentleman of your own opinion proposed to me some years since:—"Sir, how is it that so soon

kept us a long time in debate; strenuously opposed the declaration; and to the last would not consent to sign it. He maintained that our second justification (that is, at the day of judgment) is by works; and he saw very clearly that for one that holds that tenet solemnly 'to declare in the sight of God that he has no trust or confidence but in the alone merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, for justification or salvation, either in life, death, or the day of judgment,' would be acting neither a consistent, nor an upright part; for all the subtilties of metaphysical distinction can never reconcile tenets so diametrically opposite as these. But, blessed be God, Mr. Wesley, and fifty-three of his preachers, do not agree with Mr. Olivers in this material article; for it appears from their subscribing the declaration, that they do not maintain a second justification by works.

"After the declaration had been agreed to, it was required of me, on my part, that I would make some public acknowledgment that I had mistaken the meaning of the minutes. Here I hesitated a little; for though I was desirous to do every thing (consistently with truth and a good conscience) for the establishment of peace and Christian fellowship; yet I was very unwilling to give any thing under my hand that might seem to countenance the minutes in their obvious sense. But then, when I was asked by one of the preachers whether I did not believe Mr. Wesley to be an honest man; I was distressed on the other hand, lest, by refusing what was desired, I should seem to infer a doubt to Mr. Wesley's disadvantage. Having confidence, therefore, in Mr. Wesley's integrity, who had declared he had no such meaning in the minutes, as was favorable to justification by works; and, considering that every man is the best judge of his own meaning, and has a right, so far, to our credit, and that, though nothing else could, yet the declaration did convince me, they had some other meaning than what appeared:—I say, (these things considered,) I promised them satisfaction in this particular; and, a few days afterwards, sent Mr. Wesley the following message, with which he was very well pleased:

[Then follows Mr. Shirley's note, as given above.]

"Thus far all was well.—The foundation was secured.—And, with respect to lesser matters of difference, we might well bear with one another; and if either party should see occasion to oppose the other's peculiar opinion, it might be done without vehemence, and without using any reproachful terms. The whole was conducted with great decency on all sides. We concluded with prayer, and with the warmest indications of mutual peace and love. For my own part, believe me, I was perfectly sincere; and thought this one of the happiest and most honorable days of my life."

The whole conduct of Mr. Shirley, in this affair, affords a pleasing contrast to that of the Hills, Toplady, and others, who soon rushed hot and reckless into the controversy. Mr. Shirley, it is true, complains, that, after this adjustment, Mr. Fletcher should have so severely attacked him in his five letters; but he appears never to have departed from the meekness of a Christian, and the manners of a gentleman.

* It ought to be observed, that Mr. Fletcher's writings are not to be considered, in every particular, as expressing the views of Mr. Wesley, and the body of Methodists; and that, though greatly admired among us, they are not reckoned among the *standards* of our doctrines.

† The titles of several of the pieces written by Toplady and others, such as "An old Fox tarred and feathered;" "The Serpent and the Fox;" "Pope John," &c.; are sufficient evidences of the temper and manner of this band of controversialists. In what the Rev. Rowland Hill calls "*Some Gentle Strictures*" on a sermon by Mr. Wesley, preached on laying the foundation-stone of the city road chapel, Mr. Wesley is subjected to certain not very *gentle* objurgations, which it would be too sickening a task to copy or to read. The Gospel Magazine, so called, was equally unmeasured in its abuse, and as vulgar; but to do justice to all parties, the Calvinists even of that day disapproved of this publication, and it was given up. Even Mr. Rowland Hill appears to have incurred the displeasure of some of his brethren; for in a second edition of his "Gentle Strictures," he explains himself—awkwardly enough, certainly—that when he called Mr. Wesley "wretch," and "miscreant," they must remember that "wretch" means "an unhappy person;" and "miscreant," "one whose belief is wrong!" We have happily no recent instances of equally unbrotherly and unchristian temper in connection with this controversy, except in the bitter and unsanctified spirit of Bogue and Bennett's History of the Dissenters. The two doctors, however, were in the habit of declining the merit of the passages on Methodism, in favor of each other; and to which of them the honor of the authorship is due, has never yet, I believe, been ascertained.—"Where there is shame," says Dr. Johnson, "there may in time be virtue."

as a man comes to the knowledge of THE TRUTH, it spoils his temper?' That it does so I had observed over and over, as well as Mr. J. had. But how can we account for it? Has the truth (so Mr. J. termed what many love to term the doctrine of free grace) a natural tendency to spoil the temper? To inspire pride, haughtiness, superciliousness? To make a man 'wiser in his own eyes than seven men that can render a reason?' Does it naturally turn a man into a cynic, a bear, a Toplady? Does it at once set him free from all the restraints of good nature, decency, and good manners? Cannot a man hold distinguishing grace, as it is called, but he must distinguish himself for passion, sourness, bitterness? Must a man, as soon as he looks upon himself to be an absolute favorite of heaven, look upon all that oppose him as Diabolonians, as predestinated dogs of hell? Truly, the melancholy instance now before us would almost induce us to think so. For who was of a more amiable temper than Mr. Hill, a few years ago? When I first conversed with him in London, I thought I had seldom seen a man of fortune who appeared to be of a more humble, modest, gentle, friendly disposition. And yet this same Mr. H., when he has once been grounded in the knowledge of THE TRUTH, is of a temper as totally different from this, as light is from darkness! He is now haughty, supercilious, disdaining his opponents as unworthy to be set with the dogs of his flock! He is violent, impetuous, bitter of spirit! In a word, the author of the review!

"O, sir, what a commendation is this of your doctrine? Look at Mr. Hill the Arminian! The loving, amiable, generous, friendly man. Look at Mr. Hill the Calvinist! Is it the same person? this spiteful, morose, touchy man? Alas! what has the knowledge of THE TRUTH done? What a deplorable change has it made? Sir, I love you still, though I cannot esteem you, as I did once. Let me entreat you, if not for the honor of God, yet for the honor of your cause, avoid, for the time to come, all anger, all spite, all sourness and bitterness, all contemptuous usage of your opponents, not inferior to you, unless in fortune. O, put on again bowels of mercies, kindness, gentleness, long suffering; endeavoring to hold, even with them that differ from you in opinion, the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace!"

This controversy, painful as it was in many respects, and the cause of much unhallowed joy to the profane wits of the day, who were not a little gratified at this exhibition of what they termed "spiritual gladiatorship," has been productive of important consequences in this country. It showed to the pious and moderate Calvinists how well the richest views of evangelical truth could be united with Arminianism; and it effected, by its bold and fearless exhibition of the logical consequences of the doctrines of the decrees, much greater moderation in those who still admitted them, and gave birth to some softened modifications of Calvinism in the age that followed;—an effect which has remained to this day. The disputes on these subjects have, since that time, been less frequent, and more temperate; nor have good men so much labored to depart to the greatest distance from each other, as to find a ground on which they could make the nearest approaches. This has been especially the case between the Methodists and the evangelical dissenters. Of late a Calvinism of a higher and sterner form has sprung up among a certain sect of the clergy of the church of England; though some of them, whatever their private theory may be, feel that these points are not fit subjects for the edification of their congregations in public discourses. Of Calvinism since the period of this controversy the Methodist preachers and societies have been in no danger; so powerful and complete was its effect upon them. At no conference, since that of 1770, has it been necessary again to ask, "wherein have we leaned too much to Calvinism?" There has been indeed, not in the body, but in some of its ministers occasionally, a leaning to what is worse than Calvinism—to a sapless, legal, and philosophizing theology. The influence of the opinions of the majority of the preachers has always, however, counteracted this; and the true balance between the extremes of each system, as set up in the doctrinal writings of Mr. Wesley, has been of late years better preserved than formerly. Those writings are, indeed, more read and better appreciated in the connection, than at some former periods; and perhaps at the present time they exert a more powerful influence than they ever did over the theological views of both preachers and people. To this the admirably complete, correct, and elegant edition of Mr. Wesley's works, lately put forth by the labor and judgment of the Rev. Thomas Jackson, will still further contribute. Numerous valuable pieces on different subjects, which had been quite lost to the public, have been recovered; and others, but very partially known, have been collected.

In the midst of all these controversies and cares, the societies continued to spread and flourish under the influence of the zeal and piety of the preachers, animated by the ceaseless activity and regular visits of Mr. Wesley, who, though now upwards of seventy years of age, seemed to possess his natural strength unabated.* His thoughts were, however, frequently turning with anxiety to some arrangement for the government of the connection after his death; and not being satisfied that the plan he had sketched out a few years before would provide for a case of so much consequence, he directed his attention to Mr. Fletcher, and warmly invited him to come forth into the work, and to allow himself to be introduced by him to the societies and preachers as their future head. Earnestly as this was pressed, Mr. Fletcher could not be induced to undertake a task to which, in his humility, he thought himself inadequate. This seems to have been his only objection; but had he accepted the offer, the plan would have failed, as Mr. Fletcher was a few years afterwards called into another world. From Mr. Charles Wesley, who had become a family man, and had nearly given up travelling, he had no hope as a successor; and even then a farther settlement would have been necessary, because he could not be expected long to survive his brother. Still therefore this important matter remained undetermined. At the time the overture was made to Mr. Fletcher, the preachers who were fully engaged in the work amounted to one hundred and fifty; and the societies, in Great Britain and Ireland, to upwards of thirty-five thousand, exclusive of the regular hearers. This rapid and constant enlargement of the connection heightened the urgency of the question of its future settlement; and it is pleasing to remark, that Mr. Charles Wesley at length entered into this feeling, and offered his suggestions. In spite of the

* In his seventy-second year he thus speaks of himself, "This being my birth day, the first day of my seventy-second year, I was considering, how is this that I find just the same strength as I did thirty years ago? that my sight is considerably better now, and my nerves firmer than they were then? that I have none of the infirmities of old age, and have lost several I had in my youth? The grand cause is the good pleasure of God, who doeth whatsoever pleaseth him.—The chief means are, 1. My constantly rising at four for about fifty years: 2. My generally preaching at five in the morning, one of the most healthy exercises in the world; 3. My never travelling less, by sea or land, than four thousand five hundred miles in a year."

little misunderstandings which had arisen, he maintained a strong interest in a work of which he had been so eminent an instrument; and this grew upon him in his latter years. Thus we have seen him springing into activity upon the sickness of his brother, before mentioned, and performing for him the full "work of an evangelist," by travelling in his place; and, upon Mr. Wesley's recovery, his labors were afforded locally to the chapels in London and Bristol, to the great edification of the congregations. In one of his latest letters to his brother, entering into the question of a provision for the settlement of the future government of the connection, he says, "I served West-street chapel on Friday and Sunday. Stand to your own proposal: 'Let us agree to differ.' I leave America and Scotland to your latest thoughts and recognitions; only observing now, that you are exactly right—keep your authority while you live; and, after your death, *detur digniori*, or rather, *dignioribus*. You cannot settle the *succession*. You cannot divine how God will settle it."

Thus Charles gave up as hopeless the return to the church, and suggested the plan which his brother adopted, to devolve the government, not indeed upon one, but upon many whom he esteemed "the worthiest," for age, experience, talent, and moderation.

CHAPTER XII.

In 1775, Mr. Wesley, during a tour in the north of Ireland, had a dangerous sickness occasioned by sleeping on the ground, in an orchard, in the hot weather, which he says he had been "accustomed to do for forty years without ever being injured by it." He was slow to admit that old age had arrived, or he trusted to triumph long over its infirmities. The consequence in this case, however, was that, after manfully struggling with the incipient symptoms of the complaint, and attempting to throw them off by reading, journeying, and preaching, he sunk into a severe fever, from which, after lying insensible for some days, he recovered with extraordinary rapidity: and resumed a service which, extended as it had been through so many years, was not yet to be terminated. Whilst in London the next year, the following incident occurred:—

An order had been made by the house of lords, "That the commissioners of his majesty's excise do write circular letters to all persons whom they have reason to suspect to have plate, as also to those who have not paid regularly the duty on the same," &c. In consequence of this order, the accountant-general for household plate sent Mr. Wesley a copy of the order, with the following letter:—

"Reverend sir,

"As the commissioners cannot doubt but you have plate for which you have hitherto neglected to make an entry, they have directed me to send you the above copy of the lords' order, and to inform you, they expect that you forthwith make due entry of all your plate, such entry to bear date from the commencement of the plate duty, or from such time as you have owned, used, had, or kept any quantity of silver plate, chargeable by the act of parliament; as in default hereof, the board will be obliged to signify your refusal to their lordships.

"N. B. An immediate answer is desired."

Mr. Wesley replied as follows:—

"Sir,

"I have two silver tea-spoons at London, and two at Bristol. This is all the plate which I have at present; and I shall not buy any more while so many around me want bread.

"I am, sir,

"Your most humble servant,

"JOHN WESLEY."

No doubt the commissioners of his majesty's excise thought that the head of so numerous a people had not forgotten his own interests, and that the interior of his *episcopal* residence in London was not without superfluities and splendor.

The bishop of Sodor and Man having written a pastoral letter to all the clergy within his diocese, to warn their flocks against Methodism, and exhorting them to present all who attended its meetings, in the spiritual courts, and to repel every Methodist preacher from the sacrament, Mr. Wesley hastened to the island, and in May, 1777, landed at Douglas. In every place he appears to have been cordially received by all ranks; and his prompt visit probably put a stop to this threatened ecclesiastical violence, for no farther mention is made of it. The societies in the island continued to flourish; and, on Mr. Wesley's second visit, he found a new bishop of a more liberal character.

The Foundry having become too small for the comfortable accommodation of the congregation in that part of London, and being also gloomy and dilapidated, a new chapel had been erected. "November 1st," says Mr. Wesley, "was the day appointed for opening the new chapel in the city-road. It is perfectly neat, but not fine, and contains far more than the Foundry; I believe, together with the morning chapel, as many as the tabernacle. Many were afraid that the multitudes, crowding from all parts, would have occasioned much disturbance; but they were happily disappointed; there was none at all: all was quietness, decency, and order. I preached on part of Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple; and both in the morning and afternoon God was eminently present in the midst of the congregation."*

Here the brothers agreed to officiate as often as possible till the congregation should be settled. Two resident clergymen were also employed at this chapel as curates, for reading the full church service, administering the sacraments, and burying the dead. But Mr. Charles Wesley took some little offence at the liberty given to the preachers to officiate in his brother's absence, and when he himself could not supply. His letter of complaint produced, however, no change in his brother's appointments, nor was it likely. Mr. Wesley knew well that his own preaching at the new chapel, and the ministrations of the other clergymen, during the hours of service in the parish church, without a license from the bishop, or the acknowledgment of his spiritual jurisdiction, was just as irregular an affair, considered ecclesiastically, as the other. The city-road chapel, with its establishment of clergy, service in canonical hours, and sacraments, was, in the eye of the law, as much as any dissenting place of worship in London, a conventicle; though, when tried by a better rule, it was eminently, in those days of power and simplicity, "none other than the house of God, and the gate of heaven," to devout worshippers. An influence of a very extraordinary kind often rested upon the vast congregations assembled there; thousands were trained up in it for the kingdom of God; and the society exhibited a greater number of members, perhaps, than any other, except that in Bristol, who, for intelligence, deep experience in the things of God, stability, meekness of spirit, and holiness of life, were at once the ornaments of Methodism, and an influential example to the other societies of the metropolis.

In 1778, Mr. Wesley began to publish a periodical work, which he entitled, "The Arminian Magazine; consisting of extracts and original treatises on universal redemption." He needed a medium through which he could reply to the numerous at-

* Journal.

tacks made upon him; and he made use of it farther to introduce into general circulation several choice treatises on universal redemption, and to publish selections from his valuable correspondence with pious persons. He conducted this work while he lived; and it is still continued by the conference, under the title of the "Wesleyan Methodist Magazine," on the same general principles as to its theology, though on a more enlarged plan.

A dispute of a somewhat serious aspect arose in the following year out of the appointment of a clergyman by Mr. Wesley to preach every Sunday evening in the chapel at Bath. It was not probable that the preachers of the circuit should pay the same deference to a strange clergyman, recently introduced, as to Mr. Wesley; but when this exclusive occupation of the pulpit on Sunday evenings was objected to by them and part of the society, Mr. Wesley, supported by his brother, who had accompanied him to Bath, stood firmly upon his right to appoint *when* and *where* the preachers should officiate, as a fundamental part of the compact between them; and the assistant preacher, Mr. M'Nab, was suspended until "he came to another mind." As Mr. M'Nab, who had thus fallen under Mr. Wesley's displeasure, was supported by many of the other preachers, a stormy conference was anticipated. To this meeting Mr. Wesley, therefore, foreseeing that his authority would be put to the trial, strongly invited his brother, in order that he might assist him with his advice. At first Mr. Charles Wesley declined, on the ground that he could not trust to his brother's vigor and resolution. He, however, attended; but when he saw that Mr. Wesley was determined to heal the breach by concession, he kept entire silence. The offending preacher was received back without censure; and, from this time, Dr. Whitehead thinks that Mr. Wesley's authority in the conference declined. This is not correct; but that authority was exercised in a different manner. Many of the preachers had become old in the work; and were men of great talents, tried fidelity, and influence with the societies. These qualities were duly appreciated by Mr. Wesley, who now regarded them more than formerly, when they were young and inexperienced, as his counsellors and coadjutors. It was an eminent proof of Mr. Wesley's practical wisdom, that he never attempted to contend with circumstances not to be controlled; and from this time he placed his supremacy no longer upon authority, but upon the influence of wisdom, character, and age, and thus confirmed rather than diminished it. Had Mr. Charles Wesley felt sure of being supported by his brother with what he called "vigor," it is plain from his letter on the occasion, that he would have stood upon the alternative of the unconditional submission of all the preachers, or a separation. His brother chose a more excellent way, and no doubt foresaw, not only that if a separation had been driven on by violence, it would have been an extensive one; but that among the societies which remained the same process would naturally, and necessarily, at some future time, take place, and so nothing be ultimately gained, to counterbalance the immediate mischief. The silence maintained by Mr. Charles Wesley in this conference did him also great honor. He suspected "the warmth of his temper;" he saw that, as his brother was bent upon conciliation, any thing he could say would only endanger the mutual confidence between him and his preachers, and he held his peace. He himself believed that a formal separation of the body of preachers and people from the church would inevitably take place after his brother's death, and thought it best to bring on the crisis before that event. "You," says he, to his brother, "think otherwise, and I submit." The fact has been, that no *such* separation as he feared, that is, separation on such principles, and under such feelings of hostility to the established church, has yet taken place.

The following letter written by Mr. Wesley in 1782, to a nobleman high in office, shows how much his mind was alive to every thing which concerned the morals and religion of the country, and is an instance of the happy manner in which he could unite courtesy with reproof, without destroying its point. A report prevailed that the ministry designed to embody the militia, and exercise them on a Sunday.

"My lord,

"If I wrong your lordship I am sorry for it; but I really believe, your lordship fears God; and I hope your lordship has no unfavorable opinion of the Christian revelation. This encourages me to trouble your lordship with a few lines which otherwise I should not take upon me to do.

"Above thirty years ago, a motion was made in parliament, for raising and embodying the militia, and for exercising them, to save time, on Sunday. When the motion was like to pass, an old gentleman stood up and said, 'Mr. Speaker, I have one objection to this: I believe an old book, called the Bible.' The members looked at one another, and the motion was dropped.

"Must not all others, who believe the Bible, have the very same objection? And from what I have seen, I cannot but think, these are still three fourths of the nation. Now, setting religion out of the question, is it expedient to give such a shock to so many millions of people at once? And certainly it would shock them extremely: it would wound them in a very tender part. For would not they, would not all England, would not all Europe, consider this as a virtual repeal of the Bible? And would not all serious persons say, 'we have little religion in the land now; but by this step we shall have less still. For wherever this pretty show is to be seen, the people will flock together: and will lounge away so much time before and after it, that the churches will be emptier than they are already!'

"My lord, I am concerned for this on a double account. First, because I have personal obligations to your lordship, and would fain, even for this reason, recommend your lordship to the love and esteem of all over whom I have any influence. Secondly, because I now reverence your lordship for your office' sake; and believe it to be my bounden duty to do all that is in my little power, to advance your lordship's influence and reputation.

"Will your lordship permit me to add a word in my old fashioned way? I pray Him that has all power in heaven and earth to prosper all your endeavors for the public good, and am,

"My lord,

"Your lordship's willing servant,

"JOHN WESLEY."

In 1783, Mr. Wesley paid a visit to Holland, having been pressed to undertake this journey by a Mr. Ferguson, formerly a member of the London society, who had made acquaintance with some pious people, who, having read Mr. Wesley's sermons, were desirous of seeing him.

The following are extracts from his journal: and they will be read with pleasure, both as exhibiting his activity at so advanced an age, and as they present an interesting picture of his intercourse with a pious remnant in several parts of that morally deteriorated country:—

"Wednesday, June 11, I took coach with Mr. Brackenbury, Broadbent, and Whitefield; and in the evening we reached Harwich. I went immediately to Dr. Jones, who received me in the most affectionate manner: about nine in the morning we

sailed; and at nine on Friday 13, landed at Helvoetsluys. Here we hired a coach for Briel; but were forced to hire a wagon also, to carry a box, which one of us could have carried on his shoulders. At Briel we took a boat to Rotterdam. We had not been long there, when Mr. Bennet, a bookseller, who had invited me to his house, called for me. But as Mr. Loyal, the minister of the Scotch congregation, had invited me, he gave up his claim, and went with us to Mr. Loyal's. I found a friendly, sensible, hospitable, and I am persuaded, a pious man.

"Saturday, 14. I had much conversation with the two English ministers, sensible, well-bred, serious men. These, as well as Mr. Loyal, were very willing I should preach in their churches; but they thought it would be best for me to preach in the episcopal church. By our conversing freely together many prejudices were removed, and all our hearts seemed to be united together.

"Sunday, 15. The episcopal church is not quite so large as the chapel in West-street: it is very elegant both without and within. The service began at half past nine. Such a congregation had not often been there before. I preached on, 'God created man in his own image.' The people 'seemed all, but their attention, dead.' In the afternoon the church was so filled, as (they informed me) it had not been for these fifty years. I preached on, 'God hath given us eternal life; and this life is in his Son.' I believe God applied it to many hearts. Were it only for this hour, I am glad I came to Holland.

"Monday, 16. We set out in a track-skuit for the Hague: by the way we saw a curiosity; the gallows near the canal, surrounded by a knot of beautiful trees! so the dying man will have one pleasant prospect here, whatever befalls him hereafter!

"At eleven we came to Delft, a large, handsome town; where we spent an hour at a merchant's house; who as well as his wife, a very agreeable woman, seemed both to fear and to love God. Afterwards we saw the great church, I think, nearly, if not quite, as long as York Minster. It is exceedingly light and elegant within, and every part is kept exquisitely clean.

"When we came to the Hague, though we had heard much of it we were not disappointed. It is indeed beautiful beyond expression. Many of the houses are exceedingly grand, and are finely intermixed with water and wood; yet not too close, but so as to be sufficiently ventilated by the air.

"Being invited to tea by Madam de Vassenaar, (one of the first quality in the Hague,) I waited upon her in the afternoon. She received us with that easy openness and affability, which is almost peculiar to Christians and persons of quality. Soon after came ten or twelve ladies more who seemed to be of her own rank, (though dressed quite plainly,) and two most agreeable gentlemen: one of whom, I afterwards understood, was a colonel in the Prince's Guards. After tea I expounded the three first verses of the thirteenth chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians: Captain M. interpreted, sentence by sentence. I then prayed, and Col. V. after me. I believe this hour was well employed.

"Tuesday, 17. We dined at Mrs. L—'s, in such a family as I have seldom seen. Her mother, upwards of seventy, seemed to be continually rejoicing in God her Saviour. The daughter breathes the same spirit; and her grandchildren, three little girls and a boy, seem to be all love. I have not seen four such children together in England. A gentleman coming in after dinner, I found a particular desire to pray for him. In a little while he melted into tears, as indeed did most of the company. Wednesday, 18. In the afternoon Madam de Vassenaar invited us to a meeting at a neighboring lady's house. I expounded Gal. vi. 14, and Mr. M. interpreted as before.

"Thursday, 19. We took boat at seven. Mrs. L. and one of her relations, being unwilling to part so soon, bore us company to Leyden, a large and populous town, but not so pleasant as Rotterdam. In the afternoon we went to Haarlem, where a plain good man and his wife received us in a most affectionate manner. At six we took boat again: as it was filled from end to end, I was afraid we should not have a very pleasant journey. After Mr. Ferguson had told the people who we were, we made a slight excuse, and sung a hymn: they were all attention. We then talked a little, by means of our interpreter, and desired that any of them who pleased would sing. Four persons did so, and sung well: after a while we sung again; so did one or two of them; and all our hearts were strangely knit together, so that when we came to Amsterdam, they dismissed us with abundance of blessings.

"Friday, 20. At five in the evening we drank tea at a merchant's, Mr. G—'s, where I had a long conversation with Mr. de H. one of the most learned as well as popular ministers in the city; and I believe (what is far more important) he is truly alive to God. He spoke Latin well, and seemed to be one of a strong understanding, as well as of an excellent spirit. In returning to our inn, we called at a stationer's, and though we spent but a few minutes, it was enough to convince us of his strong affection even to strangers. What a change does the grace of God make in the heart! Shyness and stiffness are now no more!

"Sunday, 22. I went to the new church, so called still, though four or five hundred years old. It is larger, higher, and better illuminated than most of our cathedrals. The screen that divides the church from the choir, is of polished brass, and shines like gold. I understood the psalms that were sung, and the text well, and a little of the sermon; which Mr. de H. delivered with great earnestness. At two I began the service at the English church, an elegant building, about the size of West-street chapel; only it has no galleries, nor have any of the churches in Holland. I preached on Isaiah lv. 6, 7, and I am persuaded many received the truth in the love thereof.

"After service I spent another hour at Mr. V's. Mrs. V. again asked me abundance of questions concerning deliverance from sin, and seemed a good deal better satisfied with regard to the great and precious promises. Thence we went to Mr. B. who had lately found peace with God. He was full of faith and love, and could hardly mention the goodness of God without tears. His wife appeared to be of the same spirit, so that our hearts were soon knit together. From thence we went to another family, where a large company were assembled; but all seemed open to receive instruction, and desirous to be altogether Christians.

"Wednesday, 25. We took boat for Haarlem. The great church here is a noble structure, equalled by few cathedrals in England, either in length, breadth, or height: the organ is the largest I ever saw, and is said to be the finest in Europe. Hence we went to Mr. Van K.'s, whose wife was convinced of sin, and brought to God, by reading Mr. Whitefield's sermons.

"Here we were at home. Before dinner we took a walk in Haarlem wood. It adjoins to the town, and is cut out in many shady walks, with lovely vistas shooting out every way. The walk from the Hague to Scheveling is pleasant; those near Amsterdam more so; but these exceed them all.

"We returned in the afternoon to Amsterdam, and in the evening took leave of as many of our friends as we could. How entirely were we mistaken in the Hollanders, supposing them to be of a cold, phlegmatic, unfriendly temper! I have not

met with a more warmly affectionate people in all Europe! No, not in Ireland!

"Thursday, 26. Our friends having largely provided us with wine and fruits for our little journey, we took boat in a lovely morning for Utrecht, with Mr. Van K.'s, sister, who in the way gave us a striking account. 'In that house,' said she, (pointing to it as we went by,) 'my husband and I lived: and that church adjoining it, was his church. Five years ago, we were sitting together, being in perfect health, when he dropped down, and in a quarter of an hour died: I lifted up my heart and said, *Lord, thou art my husband now;* and found no will but his.' This was a trial worthy of a Christian: and she has ever since made her word good. We were scarcely got at our inn at Utrecht when Miss L. came; I found her just such as I expected. She came on purpose from her father's country-house, where all the family were. I observe of all the pious people in Holland, that, without any rule but the word of God, they dress as plainly as Miss March did formerly, and Miss Johnson does now! And considering the vast disadvantage they are under, having no connection with each other, and being under no such discipline at all as we are, I wonder at the grace of God that is in them.

"Saturday, 28. I have this day lived fourscore years; and by the mercy of God, my eyes are not waxed dim, and what little strength of body or mind I had thirty years since, is just the same I have now. God grant I may never live to be useless. Rather may I

'My body with my charge lay down,
And cease at once to work and live.'

"Sunday, 29. At ten I began the service in the English church in Utrecht. I believe all the English in the city were present, and forty or fifty Hollanders. I preached on the 13th of the first of Corinthians, I think as searchingly as ever in my life. Afterwards a merchant invited me to dinner: for six years he had been at death's door by an asthma, and was extremely ill last night; but this morning, without any visible cause, he was well, and walked across the city to the church. He seemed to be deeply acquainted with religion, and made me promise, if I came to Utrecht again, to make his house my home.

"In the evening, a large company of us met at Miss L.'s, where I was desired to repeat the substance of my morning sermon. I did so, Mr. Toydemea, (the professor of law in the university,) interpreting it sentence by sentence. They then sung a Dutch hymn, and we an English one. Afterwards Mr. Regulet, a venerable old man, spent some time in prayer for the establishment of peace and love between the two nations.

"Tuesday, July 1. I called on as many as I could of my friends, and we parted with much affection. We then hired a yacht, which brought us to Helvoetsluys about eleven the next day. At two we went on board: but the wind turning against us, we did not reach Harwich till about nine on Friday morning. After a little rest, we procured a carriage, and reached London about eleven at night.

"I can by no means regret either the trouble or expense which attended this little journey. It opened me a way into, as it were, a new world, where the land, the buildings, the people, the customs, were all such as I had never seen before: but as those with whom I conversed were of the same spirit with my friends in England, I was as much at home in Utrecht and Amsterdam, as in Bristol and London."

That provision for the stability and the government of the connection after his death which had been to Mr. Wesley a matter of serious concern for several years, was accomplished in 1784, and gave him, whenever he subsequently adverted to the subject, the greatest satisfaction. From this time he felt that he had nothing more to do, than to spend his remaining life in the same spiritual labors in which he had been so long engaged; and that he had done all that a true prudence required, to provide for the continuance and extension of a work which had so strangely enlarged under his superintendence.

This settlement was effected by a legal instrument, enrolled in chancery, called "A Deed of Declaration," in which one hundred preachers, mentioned by name, were declared to be "the conference of the people called Methodists." By means of this deed, a legal description was given to the term conference, and the settlement of the chapels upon trustees was provided for; so that the appointment of preachers to officiate in them should be vested in the conference, as it had heretofore been in Mr. Wesley. The deed also declares how the succession and identity of the yearly conference is to be continued, and contains various regulations as to the choice of a president and secretary, the filling up of vacancies, expulsions, &c. Thus "the succession," as it was called in Mr. Charles Wesley's letter, above quoted, was provided for; and the conference, with its president, chosen annually, came into the place of the founder of the connection, and has so continued to the present day. As the whole of the preachers were not included in the deed, and a few who thought themselves equally entitled to be of the hundred preachers who thus formed the legal conference were excepted, some dissatisfaction arose; but as all the preachers were eligible to be introduced into that body, as vacancies occurred, this feeling was but partial, and soon subsided.* All the preachers in full connection were also allowed to vote in the conference; and subsequently, those who were not of the hundred, but had been in connection a certain number of years, were permitted, by their votes, to put the president into nomination for the confirmation of the legal conference. Thus all reasonable ground for mistrust and jealousy was removed from the body of the preachers at large; and with respect to the hundred preachers themselves, the president being chosen annually, and each being eligible to that honor, efficiency of administration was wisely connected with equality. The consequence has been, that the preachers have generally remained most firmly united by affection and mutual confidence, and that few serious disputes have ever arisen among them, or have extended beyond a very few individuals. Ecclesiastical history does not, perhaps, present an instance of an equal number of ministers brought into contact so close, and called so frequently together, for the discussion of various subjects, among whom so much general unanimity, both as to doctrines and points of discipline, has prevailed, joined with so much real good will and friendship towards each other, for so great a number of years. This is the more remarkable, as by their frequent changes from

* "Messrs. John Hampson, sen., and John Hampson, jun., his son, William Eells, and Joseph Pilmoor, with a few other travelling preachers, were greatly offended that their names were not inserted in the deed. By Mr. Fletcher's friendly efforts, a partial reconciliation was effected between them and Mr. Wesley; but it was of short continuance. Soon after the conference, 1784, Mr. Hampson, senior, became an independent minister: but being old and infirm, and the people poor among whom he labored, he was assisted out of the preachers' fund while he lived. He died in the year 1795. Mr. Hampson, jun. procured ordination in the established church, and got a living in Sunderland, in the north of England. Mr. Eells also left the connection, and, some time after, joined Mr. Atlay at Dewsbury; and Mr. Pilmoor went to America."—*Myles.*

station to station, opposite interests and feelings are very often brought into conflict. The final decisions of the conference on their appointment to these stations, generally the most perplexing part of its annual business, are, however, cheerfully or patiently submitted to, from the knowledge that each has of the public spirit with which that body is actuated, and the frank and brotherly manner in which all its proceedings are conducted. The order of proceeding in the business of the conference is the same as in the days of Mr. Wesley. It admits candidates for the ministry, on proper recommendation from the superintendents and district meetings; examines those who have completed their probation of four years, and receives the approved into full connection, which is its ordination; investigates, without any exception, the character and talents of those who are already in connection year by year; appoints the stations of the year ensuing; sends additional preachers to new places; receives the reports of the committees appointed to manage and distribute various funds; reviews the state of the societies; and issues an annual pastoral address. At the time of the meeting of the conferences, beside the Sunday services, public worship is held early in the morning, and in the evening of every day, except Saturday, which is usually attended by great multitudes. The business of each conference, exclusive of that done in committees which meet previously, occupies, on the average, about a fortnight in every year. Were it not for the district meetings, composed of the preachers, and the stewards of a number of circuits, or stations, in different parts of the kingdom, (an arrangement which was adopted after Mr. Wesley's death,) the business of the conference would require a much longer time to transact; but in these meetings much is prepared for its final decision.

In this important and wise settlement of the government of the connection by its founder, there appears but one regulation which seems to controvert that leading maxim to which he had always respect, namely, to be guided by circumstances in matters not determined by some great principle. I allude to the proviso which obliges the conference not to appoint any preacher to the same chapel for more than three years successively, thus binding an itinerant ministry upon the societies for ever. Whether this system of changing ministers be essential to the spiritual interests of the body or not, or whether it might not be usefully modified, will be matters of opinion; but the point ought perhaps to have been left more at liberty.

CHAPTER XIII.

The state in which the separation of the United States from the mother country left the Methodist American societies, had become a matter of serious concern to Mr. Wesley, and presented to him a new case, for which it was imperative to make some provision. This, however, could not be done but by a proceeding which he foresaw would lay him open to much remark, and some censure, from the rigid English episcopalians. But with him, the principle of making every thing indifferent give place to the necessity of doing good or preventing evil, was paramount; and when that necessity was clearly made out, he was not a man to hesitate. The mission of Messrs. Boardman and Pilmoor to America has been already mentioned. Two years afterward, in 1771, Mr. Wesley sent out Messrs. Asbury and Wright; and in 1773, Messrs. Rankin and Shadford. In 1777, the preachers in the different circuits in America had amounted to forty, and the societies had also greatly increased. These were scattered in towns and settlements so distant, that it required constant and extensive travelling from the preachers to supply them with the word of God. The two last mentioned preachers returned, after employing themselves on the mission for about five years; and Mr. Asbury, a true itinerant, who in this respect followed in America the unwearied example of Mr. Wesley, gradually acquired a great and deserved influence, which, supported as it was by his excellent sense, moderating temper, and entire devotedness to the service of God, increased rather than diminished to the end of a protracted life. The American preachers, like those in England, were at first restrained by Mr. Wesley from administering either of the sacraments; but when, through the war, and the acquisition of independence by the states, most of the clergy of the church of England had left the country, neither the children of the members of the Methodist societies could be baptized, nor the Lord's supper administered among them, without a change of the original plan. Mr. Asbury's predilections for the former order of things prevented him from listening to the request of the American societies to be formed into a regular church, and furnished with all its spiritual privileges; and a division had already taken place among them. This breach, however, Mr. Asbury had the address to heal; and at the peace he laid the whole case before Mr. Wesley. The result will be seen in the following letter:—

"TO DR. COKE, MR. ASBURY, AND OUR BRETHREN IN NORTH AMERICA.

Bristol, Sept. 10, 1784.

"By a very uncommon train of providences, many of the provinces of North America are totally disjoined from their mother country, and erected into independent states. The English government has no authority over them, either civil or ecclesiastical, any more than over the states of Holland. A civil authority is exercised over them, partly by the congress, partly by the provincial assemblies. But no one either exercises or claims any ecclesiastical authority at all. In this peculiar situation, some thousands of the inhabitants of these states desire my advice; and, in compliance with their desire, I have drawn up a little sketch.

"Lord King's account of the primitive church convinced me, many years ago, that bishops and presbyters are the same order, and consequently have the same right to ordain. For many years I have been importuned, from time to time, to exercise this right, by ordaining part of our travelling preachers; but I have still refused, not only for peace' sake, but because I was determined, as little as possible, to violate the established order of the national church to which I belonged.

"But the case is widely different between England and North America. Here there are bishops who have a legal jurisdiction. In America there are none, neither any parish ministers. So that, for some hundred miles together, there is none either to baptize or to administer the Lord's supper. Here, therefore, my scruples are at an end; and I conceive myself at full liberty, as I violate no order, and invade no man's right, by appointing and sending laborers into the harvest.

"I have accordingly appointed Dr. Coke and Mr. Francis Asbury to be joint superintendents over our brethren in North America, as also Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey to act as elders among them, by baptizing and administering the Lord's supper. And I have prepared a liturgy little differing from that of the church of England, (I think the best constituted national church in the world,) which I advise all the travelling preachers to use on the Lord's day, in all the congregations, reading the litany only on Wednesdays and Fridays, and praying extempore on all other days. I also advise

the elders to administer the supper of the Lord on every Lord's day.

"If any one will point out a more rational and scriptural way of feeding and guiding those poor sheep in the wilderness, I will gladly embrace it. At present I cannot see any better method than that I have taken.

"It has, indeed, been proposed to desire the English bishops to ordain part of our preachers for America. But to this I object, 1. I desired the bishop of London to ordain only one, but could not prevail: 2. If they consented, we know the slowness of their proceedings; but the matter admits of no delay: 3. If they would ordain them now, they would likewise expect to govern them. And how grievously would this entangle us? 4. As our American brethren are now totally disentangled both from the state and from the English hierarchy, we dare not entangle them again either with the one or the other. They are now at full liberty simply to follow the Scriptures and the primitive church. And we judge it best that they should stand fast in that liberty wherewith God has so strangely made them free.

"JOHN WESLEY."

Two persons were thus appointed as superintendents or bishops, and two as elders, with power to administer the sacraments, and the American Methodists were formed into a church, because they could no longer remain a society attached to a colonial establishment which then had ceased to exist. The propriety and even necessity of this step is sufficiently apparent; but the mode adopted exposed Mr. Wesley to the sarcasms of his brother, who was not a convert to his opinion as to the identity of the order of bishops and presbyters; and to all high churchmen the proceeding has had the appearance of great irregularity. The only real irregularity, however, has been generally overlooked, whilst a merely apparent one has been made the chief subject of animadversion. The true anomaly was, that a clergyman of the church of England should ordain, in any form, without separating from that church, and formally disavowing its authority; and yet, if its spiritual governors did not choose to censure and disown him for denying the figment of the uninterrupted succession, which he openly said "he knew to be a fable;" for maintaining that bishops and priests were originally one order only; (points, let it be observed, which perhaps but few churchmen will now, and certainly but few at that time, would very seriously maintain, so decisive is the evidence of Scripture and antiquity against them, and so completely was the doctrine of the *three* orders given up by the founders of the English church itself;)* nor, finally, for proceeding to act upon that principle by giving orders; it would be hard to prove that he was under any moral obligation to withdraw from the church. The bishops did not institute proceedings against him, and why should he formally renounce them altogether? It was doubtless such a view of his liberty, in this respect, that made him say on this occasion, in answer to his brother, "I firmly believe that I am a scriptural ἐπίσκοπος as much as any man in England, or in Europe; for the uninterrupted succession I know to be a fable, which no man ever did or can prove. But this does, in no wise, interfere with my remaining in the church of England; from which I have no more desire to separate than I had fifty years ago."

The point which has been most insisted upon is the absurdity of a priest ordaining bishops. But this absurdity could not arise from the principle which Mr. Wesley had adopted, viz. that the orders were identical; and the censure therefore rests only upon the assumption, that bishops and priests were of different orders, which he denied. He never did pretend to ordain bishops in the modern sense, but only according to his view of primitive episcopacy. Little importance therefore is to be attached to Mr. Moore's statement,* that Mr. Wesley having named Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury simply superintendents, he was displeased when, in America, they took the title of bishops. The only objection he could have to the name was, that from long association it was likely to convey a meaning beyond his own intention. But this was a matter of mere prudential feeling, confined to himself: so that neither are Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury to be blamed for using that appellation in Mr. Wesley's sense, which was the same as presbyter, as far as order was concerned; nor the American societies, (as they have sometimes inconsiderately been,) for calling themselves, in the same view, 'The American Methodist Episcopal Church;' since their episcopacy is founded upon the principle of bishops and presbyters being of the same *degree*—a more extended *office* only being assigned to the former, as in the primitive church. For though nothing can be more obvious than that the primitive pastors are called bishops or presbyters indiscriminately in the New Testament; yet, at an early period, those presbyters were, by way of distinction, denominated bishops, who presided in the meetings of the presbyters, and were finally invested with the government of several churches, with their respective presbyteries; so that two *offices* were then, as in this case, grafted upon the same *order*. Such an arrangement was highly proper for America, where many of the preachers were young, and had also to labor in distant and extensive circuits, and were therefore incapable of assisting, advising, or controlling each other. A travelling episcopacy, or superintendency, was there an extension of the office of elder or presbyter, but it of course created no other distinction; and the bishops of the Methodist church in America have in practice as well exemplified the primitive spirit, as in principle they were conformed to the primitive discipline. Dr. Coke was only an occasional visitant in America, and though in the sense of *office* he was a bishop there, when he returned home, as here he had no such office, so he used no such title, and made no such pretension. Of this excellent man, it ought here to be said, that occasional visits to America could not satisfy his ardent mind; he became the founder and soul of the Methodist missions in various parts of the world, first

* "I am not ashamed of the room and office which I have given unto me by Christ to preach his gospel; for it is the power of God, that is to say, the elect organ or instrument ordained by God, and endued with such virtue and efficacy, that it is able to give, and administer effectually, everlasting life unto all those that will believe and obey unto the same.

"Item. That this office, this power and authority, was committed and given by Christ and his apostles unto certain persons only, that is to say, unto priests and bishops whom they did elect, call and admit thereunto, by their prayers, and imposition of their hands.

"*The truth is, there is no mention made of any degrees or distinctions in orders, but only of deacons or ministers, and of priests or bishops.*—A DECLARATION MADE OF THE FUNCTIONS AND DIVINE INSTITUTION OF BISHOPS AND PRIESTS, *Regno Hen.* VIII. *circiter A. D.* 1537—40.

"This declaration was signed by Cromwell, the vicar general, Cranmer and Holgate, the archbishops, with many of their suffragans, together with other persons intituled.

"*Sacræ Theologiæ, Juris Ecclesiastici et Civilis, Professores.*"

Archbishop Usher's plan for comprehending the Presbyterians and Episcopalians in the time of Charles I. was also founded upon the principle of bishops and presbyters being *one order*.

* Life of Wesley.

under the direction of Mr. Wesley, and then in conjunction with the conference; and by his voyages, travels, and labors, he erected a monument of noble and disinterested zeal and charity, which will never be obliterated.* But Mr. Asbury remained the preaching, travelling, self-denying bishop of the American societies, till afterwards others were associated with him, plain and simple in their manners as the rest of their brethren, and distinguished from them only by "labors more abundant."

It was by thus absurdly confounding episcopacy in the modern acceptation, and in Mr. Wesley's view, that a good deal of misplaced wit was played off on this occasion; and not a little bitterness was expressed by many. He, however, performed a great and good work, and not only provided for the spiritual wants of a people who indirectly had sprung from his labors; but gave to the American church a form of administration admirably suited to a new and extensive empire, and, under which, the societies have, by the divine blessing, prospered beyond all precedent. Some letters passed between him and Mr. Charles Wesley on the subject of the American ordinations. The first, written by Charles, was warm, and remonstrative; the second, upon receiving his brother's calm answer, was more mild, and shows, that he was less afraid of what his brother had done for America, than that Dr. Coke, on his return should form the Methodists of England into a regular and separate church also! The concluding paragraph of this letter is, however, so affecting, so illustrative of that oneness of heart, which no difference of opinion between the brothers could destroy, that it would be unjust to the memory of both, not to insert it:—

"I thank you for your intention to remain my friend. Herein my heart is as your heart. Whom God hath joined, let no man put asunder. We have taken each other for better for worse, till death do us—part? no: but eternally unite. Therefore, in the love which never faileth, I am

"Your affectionate friend and brother,

"C. WESLEY."

Some time after this, Mr. Wesley appointed several of the English preachers, by imposition of hands, to administer the sacraments to the societies in Scotland. There the English establishment did not extend, and a necessity of a somewhat similar kind existed, though not of so pressing a nature as in America. He, however, steadily objected to give this liberty, generally, to his preachers in England, and those who administered the sacraments in Scotland were not permitted to perform the same office in England upon their return. The reason why he refused to appoint in the same manner, and for the same purpose, for England, is stated in the letter above given. He was satisfied of his power, as a presbyter, to ordain for such an administration; but, he says, "I have still refused, not only for peace' sake, but, because I was determined as little as possible to violate the established order of the national church to which I belonged." This was a prudent principle most sincerely held by him; and it explains his conduct in those particulars for which he has been censured by opposite parties. When it could not be avoided, without sacrificing some real good, he did violate "the established order," thinking that this order was in itself merely prudential. When that necessity did not exist, his own predilections, and the prejudices of many members of his societies, enforced upon him this abstinence from innovation. It may, however, be asked, in what light Mr. Wesley's appointments to the ministry, in the case of his own preachers, ought to be viewed. That they were ordinations to the work and office of the ministry, cannot be reasonably and scripturally doubted; and that they were so in his own *intention*, we have before shown from his own minutes. It was required of them, as early as 1746, to profess to be "moved by the Holy Ghost, and to be called of God to preach." This professed call was to be tested by their piety, their gifts, and their usefulness; all of which points were investigated; and after probation they were solemnly received by prayer "to labor with him in the gospel;" and from that time were devoted wholly to their spiritual work,* including the *pastoral* care of societies. Here was ordination, though without imposition of hands, which, although an impressive ceremony, enters not, as both the Scriptures and the nature of the thing itself point out, into the essence of ordination; which is a separation of men by ministers, to the work of the ministry, by solemn prayer. This was done at every conference, by Mr. Wesley, who, as he had, as early as 1747, given up the uninterrupted succession and the distinct order of bishops as a fable, left himself, therefore, at liberty to appoint to the ministry in his own way. He made, it is true, a distinction at one time between the primitive offices of evangelists or teachers, and pastors, as to the right of giving the sacraments, which he thought belonged to the latter only; but as this implied, that the primitive pastors had powers, which the primitive evangelists, who ordained them, had not, it was too unsupported a notion for him long to maintain.† Yet, had this view of the case been allowed, the preachers were not mere teachers, but pastors in the fullest sense. They not only taught, but guided, and managed the societies; receiving members, excluding members, and administering private, as well as public, admonitions; and if they were constituted teachers and pastors by his ordination, without the circumstance of the imposition of hands, it is utterly impossible to conceive that that ceremony conveyed any larger right, *as such*, to administer the sacraments, in the case of the few he did ordain in that manner for Scotland and America. As to them it was a form of *permission* and *appointment* to exercise the right. His appointments to the ministry every conference, necessarily conveyed all the rights of a pastor, because they conveyed the pastoral office; but still it did not follow, that all the abstract rights of the ministry, thus conveyed to the body of the preachers, should be actually used. It was not imperative upon them to exercise all their functions; and he assumed no improper authority as the father and founder of the connection, to determine to what extent it was prudent to exercise them, provided he was satisfied that the sacraments were not put out of the power of the societies to observe. He exercised this suspending authority even over those preachers whom he appointed to give the sacraments in Scotland, by prohibiting them from administering in the English societies, over which they became pastors. So little difference did his ordination by imposition of hands make in their case, even in his own estimation.‡ It

* Dr. Coke connected himself with Mr. Wesley in 1776, as stated by the latter in his journal:—"Being at Kingston, near Taunton, I found a clergyman, Dr. Coke, late gentleman commoner of Jesus College, in Oxford, who came twenty miles on purpose. I had much conversation with him, and a union then began, which, I trust, shall never end." His name did not appear on the minutes till the year 1778. In that year he was appointed to labor in London.

* It is observable, that in the conference of 1768 he enjoined abstinence from all secular things upon them, both on the scriptural principle, 1 Tim. iv. 13, and on the ground, that the church, "in her office of ordination," required this of her ministers.

† See Moore's Life of Wesley, vol. ii. p. 340.

‡ When a few of the preachers received ordination from a Greek bishop, then in England, and from whom he was falsely reported himself to have sought consecra-

was, when it followed the usual mode of introducing candidates into the ministry, a mere form of permission to exercise a previous right in a particular place, and a solemn designation to this service according to a liturgical form which he greatly admired; but the true ordination of those who were so set apart to administer the sacraments to the ministry itself, was the same as that of the rest of their brethren, and took place at the same time. Thus, in Mr. Wesley's strongest language to Mr. Charles Perronet and the other preachers who thought it their duty to administer, he places his objection upon the decisive ground of his thinking it "a sin;" but not from their want of true ordination, to which he makes no allusion;* but he thought it sinful, because it would be injurious to the work of God, and so contrary to his word and will. That it was not in his view "a sin," for want of mere imposition of hands, is clear from the facts, that, in one case, he gave to one of the preachers leave to baptize and give the sacrament in particular circumstances, although he had no other ordination than his being "received into full connection" at the conference, like the rest; and allowed two others, Mr. Highfield, in England, and Mr. Myles, in Dublin, to assist him in giving the sacrament, to the great offence of the church people there.† That the original designation of the preachers to the ministry was considered by the conferences after his death—when they were obliged, in order to meet the spiritual wants and scriptural demands of the people, to administer the Lord's supper to the societies in England—as a true and full ordination to the whole office of the Christian ministry, is clear from their authorizing the preachers to give the sacraments, when requested by the societies, without reordination for this purpose, although they had Mr. Wesley's Presbyterian ordination by imposition of hands among themselves, and at their command, if they had judged it necessary to employ it. Their whole proceeding in this respect was merely to grant permission to exercise powers which they believed to have been previously conveyed by Mr. Wesley, in doing which they differed from him only in not marking that permission with any new form. Perhaps it might have been an improvement, had they accompanied all their future ordinations by the laying on of the hands of the president for the time being, assisted by a few of the senior preachers, and by using the fine ordination service of the church of England: not, indeed, that this would have given a tittle more of validity to the act; but the imposition of hands would have been in conformity to the usage of the majority of churches, and an instance of deference to an ancient scriptural form of solemn designation and blessing, used on various occasions. The whole of Mr. Wesley's proceedings, both as to America and Scotland, would have been as valid on scriptural grounds, had there been no other form used than simple prayer for men, already in the ministry, going forth on an important mission; but as the New Testament exhibited a profitable example of imposition of hands in the case of Paul and Barnabas, who had been long before ordained to the highest order of the ministry, when sent forth into a new field of labor, this example was followed.*

But we return to the continued and unabated labors of this venerable servant of God. In 1786, at the Bristol conference, the old subject of separating from the church was again discussed, and, "without one dissenting voice," it was determined to continue therein; "which determination," he remarks, "will, I doubt not, stand, at least till I am removed into a better world." After the conference was concluded, he paid a second visit to Holland, in company with Mr. Brackenbury and Mr. Broadbent, preached in various places, expounded to private companies, and engaged in conversation with many learned and pious individuals. On his return to England, his journal presents the usual record of constant preaching and travelling, interspersed with useful remark, and incident. A few gleanings from it will be read with interest:—

"Dec. 23, 1786. By great importunity I was induced (having little hope of doing good) to visit two of the felons in Newgate, who lay under sentence of

tion, he would not suffer them to administer, although he did not doubt that the Greek was a true bishop.

* As early as 1756, he says to some of the preachers, "You think it is a duty to administer. Do so, and therein follow your own conscience." That is, they were at liberty to leave him; but not a word about the invalidity of their appointment to the whole work of the ministry.

† Mr. Wesley's innovations on church-order in Dublin appear, from several of his letters, to have produced somewhat outrageous attacks upon him from several quarters in that city. In one of them he says, "Every week I am bespattered in the public papers. Many are in tears on the occasion; many terribly frightened, and crying out, 'O what will the end be?' What will it be? Why, glory to God in the highest, and peace and good will among men." Such was his rejoinder to these high church alarms. At the same time it must be conceded that, however faithful Mr. Wesley was in abiding by his leading principle of making mere adherence to what was called "*regular*," give place to the higher obligation of doing good, he was some times apt, in defending himself, to be too tenacious of appearing perfectly consistent.

* From the preceding observations, it will appear that Mr. Wesley's ordinations, both for America and Scotland, stood upon much the same ground. The full powers of the ministry had before been conveyed to the parties; but now they had a special designation to exercise them in every respect in a new and peculiar sphere. Still their ordination by imposition of hands, did not imply that their former ordination was deficient, as to the *right* of administering the sacraments which it conveyed; for then, how came Dr. Coke, who was already a presbyter of the church of England, to be ordained again, when, according to Mr. Wesley's own view, he could not be higher *in order* than a presbyter, although his powers might be *enlarged* as to their application? The conference after Mr. Wesley's death took therefore the true ground, in considering the act of admission into the ministry, so as to be devoted wholly to it, and to exercise the pastoral charge, to be a true and scriptural ordination both to preach the word, and to administer the sacraments; making wholly light of the absurd pretensions of a few among the preachers, who thought that they had received something more than their brethren from the mere ceremony of the imposition of Mr. Wesley's hands, subsequent to the ordinary appointment by him when received into the body. Some of these at the first conference after Mr. Wesley's death, stood upon this point; but Mr. Benson refuted their notion, that imposition of hands was essential to ordination. He proved from the New Testament that this was but a circumstance, and showed that the body had always possessed a ministry scripturally, and therefore validly ordained, although not in the most customary or perhaps not in the most influential form. With Mr. Benson the conference coincided; so that ordination, without imposition of hands, has continued to be the general practice to the present time. It is remarkable, that the few preachers who insisted upon imposition of hands being essential to ordination, and plumed themselves upon being distinguished from their brethren because Mr. Wesley's hands had been laid upon them, did not remember a passage in a published letter of Mr. Wesley to Mr. Walker, of Truro, dated as long before as 1756, which sufficiently shows how totally disconnected the two things were in his mind; or that, if they adverted to it, its bearing in his controversy with Mr. Walker should not have been perceived: "That the seven deacons were outwardly ordained even to that low office, cannot be denied. But Paul and Barnabas were separated for the work to which they were called. This was not ordaining them; it was only inducting them to the province for which our Lord had appointed them. For this end the prophets and teachers fasted, prayed, and 'laid their hands upon them,' a rite which was used, not *in ordination only, but in blessing, and on many other occasions.*"

death. They appeared serious: but I can lay little stress on appearances of this kind. However, I wrote in their behalf to a great man. And perhaps it was in consequence of this that they had a reprieve.

"Sunday, 24. I was desired to preach at the Old Jewry; but the church was cold, and so was the congregation. We had congregations of another kind the next day, Christmas day, at four in the morning, as well as five in the evening, at the new chapel, and at West-street chapel about noon.

"Sunday, 31. From these words of Isaiah to Hezekiah, 'set thy house in order,' I strongly exhorted all who had not done it already, to settle their temporal affairs without delay. It is a strange madness which still possesses many who are in other respects men of understanding, that they put this off from day to day, till death comes in an hour when they looked not for it.

"Friday, Jan. 5, 1787, and in the vacant hours of the following days, I read Dr. Hunter's lectures. They are very lively and ingenious. The language is good, and the thoughts generally just. But they do not suit my taste. I do not admire that florid way of writing. Good sense does not need to be so studiously adorned. I love St. John's style, as well as matter.

"Sunday, Feb. 25. After taking a solemn leave of our friends, both at West-street and the new chapel, I took the mail coach, and the next evening reached Exeter a little after ten o'clock. Tuesday, 27. We went on to Plymouth Dock. The large, new house, far the best in the west of England was well filled, though on so short a warning: and they seemed cordially to receive the exhortation, 'rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous.' I had the satisfaction to find the society here in a more flourishing state than ever. Notwithstanding all the pains that have been taken, and all the art that has been used to tear them asunder, they cleave close together, and consequently increase in number as well as in strength.

"Wednesday, March 7. It rained much while we were at Plymouth and at the Dock, and most of the way from the Dock to Exeter. But we had lovely weather to-day, and came into Bath early in the evening. So crowded a house I had not seen here for many years. I fully delivered my own soul, by strongly enforcing those awful words, 'many are called, but few are chosen.' I believe the word sunk deep into many hearts. The next evening we had another large congregation equally serious. Thursday, 8. I went on to Bristol, and the same afternoon Mrs. Fletcher came thither from Madeley. The congregation in the evening was exceedingly large. I took knowledge what spirit they were of. Indeed the work of God has much increased in Bristol since I was here last, especially among the young men, many of whom are a pattern to all the society.

"Monday, April 2. About noon I preached at Stockport, and in the evening at Manchester, where I fully delivered my own soul, both then and the next day. Wednesday, 4. I went to Chester, and preached in the evening on Heb. iii. 12. Finding there was no packet at Parkgate, I immediately took places in the mail coach for Holyhead. The porter called us at two in the morning on Thursday, but came again in half an hour to inform us the coach was full: so they returned my money, and at four I took a post chaise. We overtook the coach at Conway, and crossing the ferry with the passengers, went forward without delay; so we came to Holyhead an hour before them, and went on board between eleven and twelve o'clock. At one we left the harbor, and at two the next day came into Dublin Bay.

"On the road, and in the ship, I read Mr. Blackwell's 'Sacred Classics Illustrated and Defended.' I think he fully proves his point, that there are no expressions in the New Testament which are not found in the best and purest Greek authors. In the evening we had a Sunday's congregation, and a blessing from on high.

"Sunday, 8. (Easter day.) I preached in Bethesda, Mr. Smyth's new chapel: it is very neat, but not gay, and I believe will hold about as many people as West-street chapel. Mr. Smyth read prayers, and gave out the hymns, which were sung by fifteen or twenty fine singers: the rest of the congregation listening with much attention, and as much devotion as they would have done to an opera. But is this Christian worship? Or ought it ever to be suffered in a Christian church? It was thought we had between seven and eight hundred communicants: and indeed the power of God was in the midst of them. Our own room in the evening was well filled with people, and with the presence of God.

"On Monday and Tuesday I preached again at Bethesda, and God touched several hearts, even of the rich and great: so that, for the time at least, they were 'almost persuaded to be Christians.' It seems as if the good Providence of God had prepared this place for those rich and honorable sinners who will not deign to receive any message from God, but in a *genteel* way.

"Friday, 27. We went to Kilkenny, nine and twenty Irish miles from Mount-Mellick. Religion was here at a low ebb, and scarcely any society left, when God sent three troop of horse. Several of the men are full of faith and love; since they came, the work of God has revived. I never saw the house so filled since it was built. And the power of God seemed to rest upon the congregation, as if he would still have a people in this place.

"Wednesday, April 9. We went to Bandon: here also there has been a remarkable work of God, and yet not without many backsliders. It was therefore my chief business to strengthen the weak, and recall the wanderers. So in the evening I preached in the assembly-room, (which was offered me by the provost,) on, 'How shall I give thee up, Ephraim?'—and God applied his word. At noon we took a walk to Castle Barnard. Mr. Barnard has given it a beautiful front, nearly resembling that of Lord Mansfield's house at Caen-Wood, and opened part of his lovely park to the house, which I think has now as beautiful a situation as Rockingham-house in Yorkshire. Mr. Barnard much resembles, in person and air, the late Sir George Saville. Though he is far the richest person in these parts, he keeps no race-horses or hounds, but loves his wife and home, and spends his time and fortune in improving his estate, and employing the poor. Gentlemen of this spirit are a blessing to their neighborhood. May God increase their number!

"In the evening, finding no building would contain the congregation, I stood in the main street, and testified to a listening multitude, 'This is not your rest.' I then administered the Lord's supper to the society, and God gave us a remarkable blessing.

"Friday, May 25. I had a day of rest in this lovely family, (Mr. Slack's,) only preaching morning and evening. Saturday, 26. I preached at Ballyconnel about eleven. In the afternoon I took a walk in the bishop of Kilmore's garden. The house is finely situated; has two fronts, and is fit for a nobleman. We then went into the church-yard, and saw the venerable tomb, a plain flat stone inscribed, '*Depositum Gulielmi Bedel, quondam Episcopi Kilmorensis;*' over whom even the rebel army sung, '*Requiescat in pace ultimus Anglorum.*' 'Let the last of the Englishmen rest in peace.' At seven I preached to a large congregation: it blew a storm, but most of the congregation were covered by a

kind of shed raised for the purpose: and not a few were greatly comforted.

"Tuesday, 29. One of my horses I was obliged to leave in Dublin, and afterwards another; having bought two to supply their places. The third soon got a swelling in his shoulders, so that we doubted whether we could go on. And a boy at Clones, riding (I suppose galloping) the fourth over stones, the horse fell and nearly lamed himself: however, we went on softly to Aughalun, and found such a congregation as I had not seen before in the kingdom. The tent (that is, a covered pulpit) was placed at the foot of a green, sloping mountain, on the side of which the huge multitude sat (as their manner is) row above row. While I was explaining, 'God hath given unto us his Holy Spirit,' he was indeed poured out in a wonderful manner. Tears of joy, and cries were heard on every side: only so far suppressed as not to drown my voice. I cannot but hope that many will have cause to bless God for that hour to all eternity.

"Thursday, 31. We went over mountains and dales to Kerlish-Lodge, where we met with a hearty welcome, both from Alexander Boyle, and his amiable wife, who are patterns to all the country. Mr. Boyle had spoken to Dr. Wilson, the rector of a neighboring town, concerning my preaching in the church, who wrote to the bishop, and received a letter in answer, giving a full and free consent. The doctor desired me to breakfast with him. Meantime one of his parishioners, a warm seceder, took away the key of the church, so I preached in a neighboring orchard: I believe not in vain. The rector and his wife were in the front of the congregation. Afterward we took a view of Lord Abercorn's place. The house has a lovely situation: and the front of it is as elegant as any I have seen either in Great Britain or Ireland. The grounds are delightful indeed, perhaps equal to any in the kingdom.

"About five in the evening I preached at Killrail. No house would contain the congregation; so I preached in the open air. The wind was piercingly cold, but the people regarded it not. Afterwards I administered the Lord's supper to about a hundred of them, and then slept in peace.

"Wednesday, June 6. I took leave of my dear friends at Londonderry, and drove to Newton-Limavady. I had no design to preach there. But while we were at breakfast, the people were gathered so fast that I could not deny them. The house was soon filled from end to end. I explained to them the fellowship believers have with God. Thence I went on to Colerain, and preached at six, (as I did two years ago,) in the barrack-yard. The wind was high and sharp enough; but the people here are good old soldiers. Many attended at five in the morning, and a large congregation about six in the evening; most of whom, I believe, tasted the good word; for God was with us of a truth.

"Tuesday, 12. We came through a most beautiful country to Downpatrick, a much larger town than I imagined; I think, not much inferior to Sligo. The evening was uncommonly mild and bright, there not being a cloud in the sky. The tall firs shaded us on every side, and the fruitful fields were spread all around. The people were, I think, half as many more as were at Lisburn even on Sunday evening. On them I enforced those important words, 'Acquaint thyself now with him, and be at peace.'

"Wednesday, 13. Being informed we had only six and twenty miles to go, we did not set out till between six and seven. The country was uncommonly pleasant, running between two high ridges of mountains; but it was up hill and down all the way, so that we did not reach Rathfriland till nearly noon. Mr. Barber, the Presbyterian minister, (a princely personage, I believe six feet and a half high,) offering me his new, spacious preaching house, the congregation quickly gathered together. I began without delay to open and enforce, 'Now God commandeth all men, every where, to repent.' I took chaise the instant I had done; but the road being still up hill and down, we were two hours going what they called six miles. I then quitted the chaise, and rode forward. But even then, four miles, so called, took an hour and a half riding; so that I did not reach Dr. Lesley's, at Tandaragree, till half an hour past four. About six I stood upon the steps at Mr. Godly's door, and preached on, 'This is not your rest,' to a larger congregation, by a third, than even that at Downpatrick. I scarcely remember to have seen a larger, unless in London, Yorkshire, or Cornwall.

"Tuesday, 26.—Dublin. We were agreeably surprised with the arrival of Dr. Coke, who came from Philadelphia in nine and twenty days, and gave us a pleasing account of the work of God in America. Thursday, 28. I had a conversation with Mr. Howard, I think one of the greatest men in Europe. Nothing but the mighty power of God can enable him to go through his difficult and dangerous employments. But what can hurt us, if God be on our side?

"Sunday, July 22.—Manchester. Our service began at ten. Notwithstanding the severe cold, which has continued many days, the house was well filled; but my work was easy, as Dr. Coke assisted me. As many as could crowded in, in the evening; but many were obliged to go away. Afterwards I spent a comfortable hour with the society.

"Friday, 27. We went on to Bolton. Here are eight hundred poor children taught in our Sunday schools by about eighty masters, who receive no pay but what they are to receive from their great Master. About a hundred of them, part boys and part girls, are taught to sing. And they sang so true, that, all singing together, they seemed to be but one voice. The house was thoroughly filled, while I explained and applied the first and great commandment. What is all morality or religion without this? A mere castle in the air. In the evening, many of the children still hovering round the house, I desired forty or fifty to come in and sing,

'Vital spark of heavenly flame.'

Although some of them were silent, not being able to sing for tears, yet the harmony was such as I believe could not be equalled in the king's chapel.

"Monday, August 6th. Having taken the whole coach for Birmingham, we set out, expecting to be there as usual, about five in the evening. But having six persons within, and eight without, the coach could not bear the burden, but broke down before three in the morning. Having patched it together as well as we could, we went on to Congleton, and got another. In an hour or two this broke also; and one of the horses was so thoroughly tired, that he could hardly set one foot before the other. After all these hindrances, we got to Birmingham just at seven. Finding a large congregation waiting, I stepped out of the coach into the house, and began preaching without delay. And such was the goodness of God, that I found no more weariness when I had done, than if I had rested all the day.

"Here I took a tender leave of Mrs. Heath and her lovely daughters, about to embark with Mr. Heath, for America, whom I hardly expect to see any more till we meet in Abraham's bosom.

"Friday, 10.—Southampton. At six I preached on Hebrews iv. 14. In the afternoon I went with a gentleman (Mr. Taylor) to hear the famous musician that plays upon the glasses. By my appearing there, (as I had foreseen,) a heap of gentry attended in the evening. And I believe several of

them, as well as Mr. T. himself, did not come in vain.

"Tuesday, 14. Sailing on with a fair wind, we fully expected to reach Guernsey in the afternoon; but the wind turning contrary, and blowing hard, we found that would be impossible. We then judged it best to put in at the isle of Alderney; but we were very near being shipwrecked in the bay. About eight I went down to a convenient spot on the beach, and began giving out a hymn; a woman and two little children joined us immediately. Before the hymn was ended, we had a tolerable congregation, all of whom behaved well: part indeed continued at forty or fifty yards' distance, but they were all quiet and attentive.

"It happened, to speak in the vulgar phrase, that three or four who sailed with us from England, a gentleman, with his wife and sister, were near relations of the governor. He came to us this morning; and when I went into the room behaved with the utmost courtesy. This little circumstance may remove prejudice, and make a more open way for the gospel.

"Soon after we set sail; and after a very pleasant passage, through little islands on either hand, we came to the venerable castle, standing on a rock, about a quarter of a mile from Guernsey. The isle itself makes a beautiful appearance, spreading as a crescent to the right and left; about seven miles long, and five broad, part high land and part low. The town itself is boldly situated, rising higher and higher from the water. The first thing I observed in it was very narrow streets, and exceedingly high houses. But we quickly went on to Mr. De Jersey's, hardly a mile from the town. Here I found a most cordial welcome, both from the master of the house and all his family. I preached at seven, in a large room, to as deeply serious a congregation as I ever saw, on 'Jesus Christ, of God made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.'

"Monday, 20. We took ship between three and four in the morning, in a very small inconvenient sloop, and not a swift sailer, so that we were seven hours in sailing what is called seven leagues. About eleven we landed at St. Helier's, and went straight to Mr. Brackenbury's house. It stands very pleasantly near the end of the town, and has a large, convenient garden, with a lovely range of fruitful hills, which rise at a small distance from it. I preached in the evening to an exceedingly serious congregation, on Matt. iii. ult. And almost as many were present at five in the morning, whom I exhorted to go on to perfection, which many of them, Mr. Clarke informs me, are earnestly endeavoring to do.

"Thursday, 23. I rode to St. Mary's, five or six miles from St. Helier's, through shady, pleasant lanes. None at the house could speak English, but I had interpreters enow. In the evening our large room was thoroughly filled. I preached on, 'By grace ye are saved, through faith:' Mr. Brackenbury interpreted sentence by sentence, and God owned his word, though delivered in so awkward a manner: but especially in prayer; I prayed in English, and Mr. B. in French.

"Saturday, 25. Having now leisure, I finished a sermon on 'discerning the signs of the times.' This morning I had a particular conversation (as I had once or twice before) with Jeannie Bisson of this town, such a young woman as I have hardly seen elsewhere. She seems to be wholly devoted to God, and to have constant communication with him. She has a clear and strong understanding, and I cannot perceive the least tincture of enthusiasm. I am afraid she will not live long. I am amazed at the grace of God which is in her. I think she is far beyond Madam Guion in deep communion with God: and I doubt whether I have found her fellow in England. Precious as my time is, it would have been worth my while to come to Jersey, had it been only to see this prodigy of grace.

"Monday, 27. I thought when I left Southampton to have been there again at this day; but God's thoughts were not as my thoughts. Here we are, shut up in Jersey, for how long we cannot tell. But it is all well; for thou, Lord, hast done it. It is my part to improve the time, as it is not likely I should ever have another opportunity of visiting these islands.

"Tuesday, 28. Being still detained by contrary winds, I preached at six in the evening to a larger congregation than ever, in the assembly-room. It conveniently contains five or six hundred people.

"Wednesday, 29. I designed to have followed the blow in the morning; but I had quite lost my voice: however, it was restored in the evening, and I believe all in the assembly-room (more than the last evening) heard distinctly, while I explained and applied, 'I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God.' In the morning, Thursday, 30, I took a solemn leave of the society. We set out about nine, and reached St. Peter's in the afternoon. Good is the will of the Lord. I trust he has something more for us to do here also. After preaching to a larger congregation than was expected, on so short a notice, on, 'God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself,' I returned to Mont-Plaisir, to stay just as long as it should please God. I preached there in the morning, Friday, 31, to a congregation as serious as death.

"Saturday, September 1. This day twelvemonth I was detained in Holland by contrary winds. All is well, so we are doing and suffering the will of our Lord. In the evening, the storm driving us into the house again, I strongly exhorted a very genteel audience, (such as I have rarely seen in England,) to 'ask for the old paths, and walk therein.'

"Sunday, 2. Being still pent up by the north-east wind, Dr. Coke preached at six in the morning to a deeply affected congregation. I preached at eight, on Rom. viii. 33. At one, Mr. Vivian, a local preacher, preached in French, the language of the island. At five, as the house would not contain half the congregation, I preached in a tolerably sheltered place, on the 'joy there is in heaven over one sinner that repenteth;' and both high and low seemed to hear it gladly. I then designed to meet the society, but could not. The people pressed so eagerly on every side that the house was filled presently; so that I could only give a general exhortation, 'to walk worthy of their profession.'

"I was in hopes of sailing in the morning, Monday 3, but the storm so increased that it was judged impracticable. The congregation, however, in the evening increased every day; and they appeared to be more and more affected; so that I believe we were not detained for nothing; but for the spiritual and eternal good of many.

"Tuesday, 4. The storm continued, so that we could not stir. I took a walk to-day, through what is called, the new ground, where the gentry are accustomed to walk in the evening: both the upper ground, which is as level as a bowling-green, and the lower, which is planted with rows of trees, is wonderfully beautiful. In the evening I fully delivered my own soul, by showing what it is to 'build upon a rock.' But still we could not sail, the wind being quite contrary as well as exceedingly high. It was the same on Wednesday. In the afternoon we drank tea at a friend's, who was mentioning a captain just come from France, that proposed to sail in the morning for Penzance, for which the wind would serve, though not for Southampton. In this

we plainly saw the hand of God: so we agreed with him immediately.

"Penzance, Saturday, 8. Dr. Coke preached at six to as many as the preaching house would contain. At ten I was obliged to take the field, by the multitude of people that flocked together. I found a very uncommon liberty of speech among them, and cannot doubt but the work of God will flourish in this place. In the evening I preached at St. Ives, (but it being the market day, so that I could not stand, as usual, in the market place,) in a very convenient field at the end of the town, to a very numerous congregation, I need scarcely add, and very serious; for such are all the congregations in the county of Cornwall.

"Sunday, 9. About nine I preached at the copper works, three or four miles from St. Ives, to a large congregation, gathered from all parts, I believe 'with the demonstration of the Spirit.' I then met the society in the preaching-house, which is unlike any other in England, both as to its form and materials. It is exactly round, and composed wholly of brazen slags, which I suppose will last as long as the earth. Between one and two I begun in the market place at Redruth to the largest congregation I ever saw there. They not only filled all the windows, but sat on the tops of the houses. About five I began in the amphitheatre at Gwenap: I suppose we had a thousand more than ever were there before: but it was all one; my voice was strengthened accordingly, so that every one could hear distinctly.

"London, Sunday, Nov. 4. The congregation at the new chapel was far larger than usual; and the number of communicants was so great, that I was obliged to consecrate thrice. Monday, 5. In my way to Dorking, I read Mr. Duff's Essay on Genius. It is beyond all comparison deeper and more judicious than Dr. G's. essay on that subject. If the doctor had seen it, which one can hardly doubt, it is a wonder he would publish his essay: yet I cannot approve of his method. Why does he not first define his term, that we may know what he is talking about? I doubt, because his own idea of it was not clear. For genius is not imagination, any more than it is invention. If we mean by it a quality of the soul, it is, in its widest acceptation, an extraordinary capacity either for some particular art or science, or for all, for whatever may be undertaken. So Euclid had a genius for mathematics, Tully for oratory: Aristotle and Lord Bacon had a universal genius applicable to every thing.

"Friday, 9. A friend offering to bear my expenses, I set out in the evening, and on Saturday 10, dined at Nottingham. The preaching house, one of the most elegant in England, was pretty well filled in the evening.

"Sunday, 11. At ten, we had a lovely congregation; and a very numerous one in the afternoon: but I believe the house would hardly contain one half of those that came to it. I preached a charity sermon for the infirmary, which was the design of my coming. This is not a county infirmary, but is open to all England, yea, to all the world. And every thing about it is so neat, so convenient, and so well ordered, that I have seen none like it in the three kingdoms.

Monday, 12. In the afternoon we took coach again, and on Tuesday returned to London.

"Sunday, 25. I preached two charity sermons, at West-street, in behalf of our poor children; in which I endeavored to warn them, and all that have the care of them, against that English sin, ungodliness, that reproach of our nation, wherein we excel all the inhabitants of the earth.

"Tuesday, Dec. 4. I retired to Rainham, to prepare another edition of the New Testament for the press.

"London, Sunday, 9. I went down at half an hour past five, but found no preacher in the chapel, though we had three or four in the house: so I preached myself. Afterwards inquiring why none of my family attended the morning preaching, they said it was because they sat up too late. I resolved to put a stop to this: and, therefore, ordered, that, 1. Every one under my roof should go to bed at nine: that, 2. Every one might attend the morning preaching: and so they have done ever since.

"Monday, 10. I was desired to see the celebrated wax-work at the Museum in Spring Gardens. It exhibits most of the crowned heads in Europe, and shows their characters in their countenances. Sense and majesty appear in the king of Spain: dulness and sottishness in the king of France: infernal subtlety in the late king of Prussia: (as well as in the skeleton Voltaire:) calmness and humanity in the emperor and king of Portugal: exquisite stupidity in the prince of Orange: and amazing coarseness, with every thing that is unamiable, in the Czarina.

"Sunday, 16. After preaching at Spitalfields, I hastened to St. John's, Clerkenwell, and preached a charity sermon for the Finsbury dispensary, as I would gladly countenance every institution of this kind.

"Saturday, 22. I yielded to the importunity of a painter, and sat, an hour and a half in all, for my picture. I think it is the best that ever was taken. But what is the picture of a man above fourscore!"

These extracts are from the Journal of 1787, when Mr. Wesley was in his eighty-fifth year. The labors and journeys of almost every day are similarly noticed, exhibiting at once a singular instance of natural strength, sustained, doubtless, by the special blessing of God, and of an entire consecration of time to the service of mankind, of which no similar example is probably on record, and which is rendered still more wonderful by the consideration that it had been continued for more than half a century, on the same scale of exertion, and almost without intermission. The vigor of his mind at this age is also as remarkable; the same power of acute observation as formerly is manifested; the same taste for reading and criticism; the same facility in literary composition. Nor is the buoyant cheerfulness of his spirit a less striking feature. Nothing of the old man of unrenewed nature appears; no forebodings of evil; no querulous comparisons of the present with the past;—there is the same delight in the beautiful scenes of nature; the same enjoyment of conversation, provided it had the two qualities of usefulness and brevity; the same joy in hopeful appearances of good; and the same tact at turning the edge of little discomfits and disappointments by the power of an undisturbed equanimity. Above all we see the man of *one business*, living only to serve God and his generation, "instant in season and out of season," seriously intent, not upon doing so much duty, but upon saving souls; and preaching, conversing, and writing for this end alone. And yet this is the man whom we still sometimes see made the object of the sneers of infidel or semi-infidel philosophers; and whom book-makers, when they have turned the interesting points of his character and history into a *marketable* commodity, endeavor to dress up in the garb of a fanatic, or a dreamer, by way of rendering their works more acceptable to frivolous readers—the man to whose labors, few even of the evangelical clergy of the national church have the heart or the courage to do justice; forgetting how much that improved state of piety which exists in the establishment is owing to the indirect influence of his long life of labor, and his successful minis-

try: and that even very many of themselves have sprung from families where Methodism first lighted the lamp of religious knowledge, and produced a religious influence. It will indeed provoke a smile, to observe what effort often discovers itself in writers of this party, when referring to the religious state of the nation in the last and present century, to keep this apostolic man wholly out of sight, as though he had never existed; feeling, we suppose, that because he did not conform to the order of their church in all particulars, it would be a sin against their own orthodoxy even to name him as one of those great instruments in the hands of God, who, in mercy to these lands, were raised up to effect that vast moral and religious change, the benefits of which they themselves so richly enjoy. This may be attributed not only to that exclusive spirit which marks so many of the clergy of this class, even beyond others, notwithstanding their piety and general excellence, but to the Calvinism which many of them have imbibed. The evangelical Arminianism of Wesley has been forgiven by the orthodox dissenters; but, by a curious anomaly, not by the Calvinistic party of the church. It is probably better understood by the former.*

At the time to which the above extracts from his Journal refer, Mr. Wesley had, however, no reason to complain of any want of respect, or of a due appreciation of his labors by the serious of all parties, although he regarded it not with improper exultation, but passed through "honor," as he had passed through "dishonor" in the former years of his life, as "seeing Him who is invisible." This period of his life must have been to him, on a much higher account, one of rich reflection. In his Journal of 1785, March 24, he observes—"I was now considering how strangely the grain of mustard seed, planted about fifty years ago, had grown up. It has spread through all Great Britain, and Ireland, the Isle of Wight, and the Isle of Man; then to America, through the whole continent, into Canada, the Leeward Islands, and Newfoundland. And the societies, in all these parts, walk by one rule, knowing that religion is in holy tempers, and striving to worship God, not in form only, but likewise in spirit and in truth."

He must, indeed, have been insensible to the emotions of a generous nature, had he not felt an honest satisfaction, that he had lived down calumnies; and that where mobs formerly awaited him,

* The following passage from a sermon lately preached in his diocese, by Bishop Coplestone, may be quoted both as a better specimen of the spirit of a churchman than that above referred to, and as, perhaps, the only instance in which any thing approaching to a due estimate of Mr. Wesley's character, and the value of his labors, has been suffered publicly to escape the lips of a prelate. It was dictated evidently by a candid and liberal feeling, though not without being influenced by some of those mistaken views which will be corrected at the close of this account of Mr. Wesley's life:

"And here, not only candor and equity, but a just sense of the constitution of Christ's church, compels me to draw a marked line of distinction between those whose religious assemblies are supplementary, as it were, to our own establishment, offering spiritual comfort and instruction to hundreds unable to find it elsewhere, and those organized communities which exclude from their society any that communicate in the blessed sacrament of the Lord's supper with the national church.

"Of the former I would not only think and speak mildly, but in many cases I would commend the piety and zeal which animates them, full of danger as it is to depart from the apostolic ordinance, even in matters of outward discipline and order. The author and founder of those societies (for he was careful himself to keep them from being formed into a sect) was a regularly ordained minister, a man orthodox in his belief, simple and disinterested in his own views, and adorned with the most amiable and distinguished virtues of a true Christian. He found thousands of his countrymen, though nominally Christians, yet as ignorant of true Christianity as infidels and heathens; and in too many instances (it is useless to conceal or disguise the fact) ignorant, either through the inattention of the government in not providing for increased numbers, or through the carelessness and neglect of those whom the national church had appointed to be their pastors.

"But the beginning of schism, like that of strife, is as when one letteth out water. The gentle stream of piety and benevolence in which this practice originated, irrigating only and refreshing some parched or barren lands, soon became a swelling and rapid torrent, winding as it flowed on, and opening for itself a breach which it may yet require the care and prudence of ages to close. And even the pious author himself was not proof against that snare of Satan which, through the vanity and weakness of human nature, led him in his latter years to assume the authority of an apostle, and to establish a fraternity within the church, to be called after his own name, and to remain a lasting monument of his activity and zeal. But over errors such as these let us cast a veil; and rather rejoice in reflecting on the many whom he reclaimed from sin and wickedness, and taught to seek for salvation through the merits of their Saviour.

"Of such, I repeat, wherever a like deficiency of religious means is found, we ought to speak not only with tenderness, but with brotherly love and esteem."

It seems pretty obvious that Bishop Coplestone has taken his impressions from Southey's life of the founder of Methodism, although somewhat modified by better views of spiritual religion. The moral destitution of the country, and the negligence of the church, are acknowledged, as well as the important effects produced by Mr. Wesley's labors, at least in their early stages; and yet these results are spoken of as somewhat of a religious calamity! The beginning of "schism," as to church order, is compared to the letting out of water; and a fearful "breach" out of the established church completes the picture. How little does this sensible and amiable bishop know of the facts of the case!—as, for instance, 1. That the Methodist societies were in great part gathered not out of church-goers but church-neglecters. 2. That the effect was generally, for many years, to increase the attendance at church, and to lay the foundation in a great number of places, especially in the more populous towns, of large church congregations which have continued to this day. 3. That the still more extensive and ultimate result was, after persecution or silent contempt had been tried in vain, and when it was found that obstinate perseverance in neglect would not be any longer tolerated, that the establishment was roused into an activity by which it has doubtless been greatly benefited as far as respects its moral influence, the only influence of a church which can be permanent or valuable. 4. That very few of the Methodists of the present day would in all probability have been, in any sense which Bishop Coplestone would value, church-people; and so this supposed loss of ecclesiastical members affords but an imaginary ground for the regrets with which he seems to surround it. The intimation of Mr. Wesley's ambition is imitated from Southey. But of this enough has been said in refutation. Bishop Coplestone, indeed, regards it mildly as an infirmity, which he would charitably cover with Mr. Wesley's numerous and eminent virtues. That is kind; but Mr. Wesley himself would have taken a severer view of this "weakness," had he been conscious of the passion of ambition, in the sense in which it is here used. One might ask this respectable prelate to review the case, and say where Mr. Wesley, allowing him his conscientious conviction that he was bound to incessant activity in doing good to the souls of men, could have stopped? how he could have disposed of his societies, in the then existing state of the church? And whether, if he had this "ambition" to be the head of a sect, his whole life did not lay restraints upon it, since, from nearly the very first outset of his itinerancy and success, it has been shown in this work by extracts from the minutes of his first conferences, that he took views of ecclesiastical polity which then set him quite at liberty, had he chosen it, to form his societies into a regular church, to put himself at their head, and to kindle up a spirit of hostility to the establishment, and of warm partizanship in his own favor, throughout the land? A vicious ambition would have preferred this course. But it is not necessary to anticipate the remarks which will follow on these subjects.

he met with the kind and cheering attentions of the most respectable persons of all religious persuasions, in every part of the country. But, more than this, he could compare the dearth and barrenness of one age with the living verdure and fertility of another. Long-forgotten truths had been made familiar;—a neglected population had been brought within the range of Christian instruction, and the constant preaching of the word of life by faithful men;—religious societies had been raised up through the land, generally distinguished by piety and zeal;—by the blessing of God upon the labors of Mr. Whitefield, and others of his first associates, the old dissenting churches had been quickened into life, and new ones multiplied; the established church had been awakened from her lethargy; the number of faithful ministers in her parishes greatly multiplied; the influence of religion spread into the colonies, and the United States of America; and above all, a vast multitude, the fruit of his own ministerial zeal and faithfulness, had, since the time in which he commenced his labors, departed into a better world. These thoughts must often have passed through his mind, and inspired his heart with devout thanksgivings, although no allusion is ever made to them in a boastful manner. For the past, he knew to whom the praise belonged; and the future he left to God, certain at least of meeting in heaven a greater number of glorified spirits of whose salvation he had been, under God, the instrument, than any minister of modern ages. That "joyful hope" may explain an incident, which occurred towards the close of life, at the City-road chapel, London. After prayers had been read one Sunday afternoon, he ascended the pulpit; where, instead of announcing the hymn immediately, he, to the great surprise of the congregation, stood silent, with his eyes closed, for the space of at least ten minutes, rapt in thought; and then, with a feeling which at once conveyed to all present the subject which had so absorbed his attention, gave out the hymn commencing with the lines:—

"Come, let us join our friends above,
Who have obtained the prize," &c.

It was also his constant practice to preach on All Saints' Day, which was with him a favorite festival, on communion with the saints in heaven; a practice probably arising out of the same delightful association of remembrances and hope.

On his attaining his eighty-fifth year, he makes the following reflections:—

"I this day enter on my eighty-fifth year. And what cause have I to praise God, as for a thousand spiritual blessings, so for bodily blessings also! How little have I suffered yet, by 'the rush of numerous years!' It is true, I am not so agile as I was in times past: I do not run or walk so fast as I did. My sight is a little decayed. My left eye is grown dim, and hardly serves me to read. I have daily some pain in the ball of my right eye, as also in my right temple, (occasioned by a blow received some time since) and in my right shoulder and arm, which I impute partly to a sprain, and partly to the rheumatism. I find likewise some decay in my memory, with regard to names and things lately past: but not at all with regard to what I have read or heard, twenty, forty, or sixty years ago. Neither do I find any decay in my hearing, smell, taste, or appetite, (though I want but a third part of the food I once did,) nor do I feel any such thing as weariness, either in travelling or preaching, and I am not conscious of any decay in writing sermons, which I do as readily, and I believe as correctly, as ever.

"To what cause can I impute this, that I am as I am? First, doubtless, to the power of God, fitting me for the work to which I am called, as long as he pleases to continue me therein: and next, subordinately to this, to the prayers of his children.—May we not impute it, as inferior means: 1. To my constant exercise and change of air? 2. To my never having lost a night's sleep, sick or well, at land or sea, since I was born? 3. To my having sleep at command, so that whenever I feel myself almost worn out, I call it, and it comes, day or night? 4. To my having constantly, for above sixty years, risen at four in the morning? 5. To my constant preaching at five in the morning, for above fifty years? 6. To my having had so little pain in my life, and so little sorrow or anxious care?—Even now, though I find pain daily in my eye, temple, or arm, yet it is never violent, and seldom lasts many minutes at a time.

"Whether or not this is sent to give me warning that I am shortly to quit this tabernacle, I do not know: but, be it one way or the other, I have only to say,—

'My remnant of days
I spend to his praise,
Who died the whole world to redeem:
Be they many or few,
My days are his due,
And they all are devoted to Him!'"

And, referring to some persons in the nation who thought themselves endowed with the gift of prophecy, he adds, "If this is to be the last year of my life, according to some of these prophets, I hope it will be the best. I am not careful about it, but heartily receive the advice of the angel in Milton,—

'How well, is thine; how long, permit to heaven.'"

CHAPTER XIV.

The brothers, whose affection no differences of opinion, and no conflicts of party, could diminish, were now to be separated by death. Of the last days of Mr. Charles Wesley, Dr. Whitehead gives the following account:—

"Mr. Charles Wesley had a weak body, and a poor state of health, during the greatest part of his life. I believe he laid the foundation of both at Oxford by too close application to study and abstinence from food. He rode much on horseback, which probably contributed to lengthen out life to a good old age. I visited him several times in his last sickness; and his body was indeed reduced to the most extreme state of weakness. He possessed that state of mind which he had been always pleased to see in others—unaffected humility, and holy resignation to the will of God. He had no transports of joy, but solid hope and unshaken confidence in Christ, which kept his mind in perfect peace. A few days before his death he composed the following lines. Having been silent and quiet for some time, he called Mrs. Wesley to him, and bid her write as he directed.

In age and feebleness extreme,
Who shall a sinful worm redeem?
Jesus, my only hope thou art,
Strength of my failing flesh and heart;
O could I catch a smile from thee,
And drop into eternity!'

"He died, March 29th, 1788, aged seventy-nine years and three months; and was buried, April 5th, in Marybone churchyard at his own desire. The pall was supported by eight clergymen of the church of England. On his tomb-stone are the following lines, written by himself on the death of one of his friends: they could not be more aptly applied to any person than to Mr. Charles Wesley:—

'With poverty of spirit bless'd,
Rest, happy saint, in Jesus rest;

A sinner sav'd, through grace forgiven,
Redeem'd from earth to reign in heaven!
Thy labors of unwearied love,
By thee forgot, are crown'd above;
Crown'd through the mercy of thy Lord
With a free, full, immense reward!'

"Mr. Charles Wesley was of a warm and lively disposition, of great frankness and integrity, and generous and steady in his friendships. In conversation he was pleasing, instructive, and cheerful; and his observations were often seasoned with wit and humor. His religion was genuine and unaffected. As a minister, he was familiarly acquainted with every part of divinity; and his mind was furnished with an uncommon knowledge of the Scriptures. His discourses from the pulpit were not dry and systematic, but flowed from the present views and feelings of his own mind. He had a remarkable talent of expressing the most important truths with simplicity and energy; and his discourses were sometimes truly apostolic, forcing conviction on the hearers in spite of the most determined opposition. As a husband, a father, and a friend, his character was amiable. Mrs. Wesley brought him five children, of whom two sons and a daughter are still living.* The sons discovered so fine a taste for music, at an early period of life, that they excited general astonishment; and they are now justly admired by the best judges for their talents in that pleasing art. The Methodists are greatly indebted to Charles Wesley for his unwearied labors and great usefulness at the first formation of the societies, when every step was attended with difficulty and danger. And being dead he yet speaketh by his numerous and excellent hymns, written for the use of the societies, which still continue to be the means of daily edification and comfort to thousands."†

For the spiritual advantages which the Methodists have derived from his inestimable hymns, which are in constant use in their congregations, as well as for his early labors, the memory of Mr. Charles Wesley indeed deserves to be had in their everlasting remembrance; and they are not insensible of the value of the gift. Their taste has been formed by this high standard; and, notwithstanding all the charges of illiteracy, and want of mental cultivation, which have been often brought against them, we may venture to say, there are few collections of psalms and hymns in use in any other congregations, that would, as *a whole*, be tolerated amongst them;—so powerful has been the effect produced by his superior compositions. The clear and decisive character of the religious experience which they describe; their force, and life, and earnestness; commended them, at the first, to the piety of the societies, and, through that, insensibly elevated the judgment of thousands, who, otherwise, might have relished, as strongly as others, the rudeness of the old version of the Psalms, the tameness of the new, and the tinsel metaphors and vapid sentimentalisms which disfigure numerous compositions of different authors, in most collections of hymns in use. It would seem, indeed, from the very small number of really good psalms and hymns which are adapted to public worship and the use of religious societies, that this branch of sacred poetry has not been very successfully cultivated: and that the combination of genius, judgment, and taste, requisite to produce them, is very rarely found. Germany is said to be more abundant in good hymns than England: and some of the most excellent of the Wesleyan hymns are imitations of German hymns admirably versified. But in our language the number is small. Hymns, indeed, abounding in sweet thoughts, though often feebly expressed, and such as may be used profitably in the closet or the family circle, are not so rare. But the true sacred lyric, suited for public worship, and the select assemblies of the devout, is as scarce as it is valuable. From the rustic rhyming of Sternhold and Hopkins, to the psalms and hymns of Dr. Watts, the advance was indeed unspeakably great. A few, however, only of the latter, in comparison of the whole number, are unexceptionable throughout.—When they are so, they leave nothing to be desired; but many of Dr. Watts's compositions begin well, often nobly, and then fall off into dulness and puerility; and not a few are utterly worthless, as being poor in thought, and still more so in expression. The piety and sweetness of Doddridge's hymns must be felt; but they are often verbose and languid, and withal faultly and affected in their metaphors. The Olney collection has many delightful hymns for private use; but they are far from being generally fit for the public services of religion, and are often in bad taste; not even excepting many of Cowper's. This may be spoken without irreverence, for the greatest poets have not proved the best hymn makers. Milton made but one tolerable psalm; and still more modern poets of note have seldom fully redeemed the credit of their class. The fact seems to be, that when the mind is very rich in sentiment and imagery, those qualities are usually infused into sacred song in too large proportions. Sentiment and genuine religious feeling are things quite distinct, and seldom harmonize; at least, though they may sometimes approach to the verge of each other, they will not amalgamate; and exuberance of metaphor is inconsistent with strong and absorbing devotion, and proves too artificial to express the natural language of the heart. The talent of correct and vigorous versification is, for these reasons, more likely to produce the true "spiritual song" than luxuriance of imagination and great creative genius, provided the requisite theological and devotional qualities be also present. A hymn suitable for social worship ought to be terse and vigorous; and it is improved when every verse closes with a sense so full and pointed as frequently to make some approach to the character of the ancient epigram; or,

* Miss Wesley, a lady of eminent talents, and great excellence, died September 19, 1828.

It would be improper to withhold, as I have them before me, in the unpublished letters with which I have been favored, some incidental remarks of the late Miss Wesley, on the character of her father:—

"Mr. Moore seems to think that my father preferred *rest to going about to do good.* He had a rising family, and considered it his duty to confine his labors to Bristol and London, where he labored most sedulously in ministerial offices; and judged that it was incumbent upon him to watch over the youth of his sons, especially in a profession which nature so strongly pointed out, but which was peculiarly dangerous. He always said his brother was formed to lead, and he to follow. No one ever more rejoiced in another's superiority, or was more willing to confess it. Mr. Moore's statement of his absence of mind in his younger days, was probably correct, as he was born impetuous, and ardent, and sincere. But what a change must have taken place when we were born! For his exactness in his accounts, in his manuscripts, in his bureau, &c., equalled my uncle's. Not in his dress, indeed; for my mother said, if she did not watch over him, he might have put on an old for a new coat, and marched out. Such was his power of abstraction, that he could read and compose, with his children in the room, and visitors talking around him. He was near forty when he married, and had eight children, of whom we were the youngest. So kind and amiable a character in domestic life can scarcely be imagined. The tenderness he showed in every weakness, and the sympathy in every pain, would fill sheets to describe. But, I am not writing his eulogy; only I must add, with so warm a temper, he never was heard to speak an angry word to a servant, or known to strike a child in anger—and he knew no guile!"

† Whitehead's Life.

as Mr. Montgomery has happily expressed it, "each stanza should be a poetical tune, played down to the last note."—The meaning ought also to be so obvious as to be comprehended at once, that men may speak to God directly, without being distracted by investigating the real meaning of the words put into their lips. And when metaphor is efficiently employed, it must be generally such as the Scriptures have already sanctioned; for with *their* imagery we are all familiar, and it stands consecrated to the service of the sanctuary by inspired authority. Yet even this ought not to be adopted in an extended form, approaching to allegory; and is always more successful when rather lightly touched and suggested, than when dwelt upon with particularity. Cowper's fine hymn on Providence is greatly improved by omitting the stanza:—

"His purposes will ripen fast,
Unfolding every hour;
The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flower."

This is a figure not only not found in sacred inspired poetry, but which has too much *prettiness* to be the vehicle of a sublime thought, and the verse has moreover the fault of an absurd antithesis, as well as a false rhyme. Many modern hymns are, indeed, as objectionable from the character of their imagery, as from the meagreness of their thoughts; and there are a few somewhat popular, which, leaving out or changing a few sacred terms, would chime agreeably enough to the most common sentimental subjects.

To Dr. Watts and to Mr. Charles Wesley the largest share of gratitude is due, in modern times, from the churches of Christ, for that rich supply of "Psalms and Hymns and Spiritual Songs," in which the assemblies of the pious may make melody unto the Lord, in strains which "angels might often delight to hear." No others are to be named with these sweet singers of the spiritual Israel; and it is probable that, through the medium of their verse chiefly, will the devotions of our churches be poured forth till time shall be no more. No other poets ever attained such elevation as this. They honored God in their gifts, and God has thus honored them to be the mouth of his people to him, in their solemn assemblies, in their private devotions, and in the struggles of death itself.

It would be an unprofitable task to compare the merits of these two great psalmists. Each had excellencies not found in the other. Watts, however, excels Mr. Charles Wesley, only in the sweeter flow of his numbers, and in the feeling and sympathy of those of his hymns which are designed to administer comfort to the afflicted. In composition he was, in all respects, decidedly his inferior—in good taste, classic elegance, uniformity of excellence, correct rhyming, and vigor. As to the theology of their hymns respectively, leaving particular doctrines out of the question, the great truths of religious experience are also far more clearly and forcibly embodied by Mr. Charles Wesley than by Dr. Watts. Most justly does his brother say of them in his preface to "The Collection of Hymns for the use of the people called Methodists," of which, only a few are his own, and almost all the rest from the pen of Mr. Charles Wesley—"In these hymns, there is no doggerel, no botches, nothing put in to patch up the rhyme, no feeble expletives. Here is nothing turgid or bombastic, on the one hand, or low and creeping on the other. Here are no cant expressions, no words without meaning. Here are (allow me to say) both the purity, the strength, and the elegance of the English language; and, at the same time, the utmost simplicity and plainness, suited to every capacity. *

* In this collection, beside a few hymns by Mr. John Wesley, there are four or five from Dr. Watts. Several are translations by the Wesleys: one from the Spanish, "O God, my God, my all thou art," &c.: one from the French, "Come Saviour Jesus, from above:" and the others from the German hymns of the Lutheran and Moravian churches. Several of these translated hymns Mr. Montgomery has inserted in his "Psalmist," and marked "Moravian." They appear indeed in the Moravian Hymn Book, but in departments there, in which are also found the hymns of Dr. Watts and other English authors. The preface of the edition of 1754, the first authorized collection of the English Moravians, and which embodies their former unauthorized publications, acknowledges "the foregoing labors of Mr. Jacobi and the Rev. Mr. Wesley," in the translation of German hymns of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, besides extracts of English ones of the eighteenth, from "Watts, Stennett, Davis, Erskine, Wesley," &c.; which acknowledgment was no doubt overlooked by Mr. Montgomery. The hymns translated by the Wesleys, and said by Mr. Montgomery in his collection to be "Moravian," are, "Thou hidden love of God, whose height;" "Thee will I love, my strength, my tower;" "Shall I for fear of feeble man;" "O thou who camest from above;" "Now I have found the ground wherein;" "My soul before thee prostrate lies;" and "Holy Lamb, who thee receive." Now all these were published by the Wesleys before the Moravian Hymn Book of 1754, in which the "foregoing labors of Mr. Wesley," in translating from the German, are acknowledged; and indeed most of them appear in the very first hymn books published by John and Charles Wesley, two of which bear date so early as 1739, fifteen years previous to the publication of the authorized Moravian collection. As translations, they are not therefore "Moravian;" and, when they are translated from "the German," it does not follow that they all have a Moravian original, though some of them may; for the Moravian German book, like the English, as we learn from the preface to their English Hymn Book, "consists as well of hymns out of preceding church collections of their neighbors, as of others composed by themselves." The hymn, "High on his everlasting throne," marked "Moravian" by Mr. Montgomery, and mentioned also in his preface, is a Moravian German hymn; but the translation is by Mr. Charles Wesley; whilst "Give to the winds thy fears," also marked Moravian, is a German hymn of the Lutheran church, and the translation is Mr. Charles Wesley's. Of this hymn there is a version in the Moravian English Hymn book; the last stanza of which, when placed beside Mr. C. Wesley's, will show with what strength of internal evidence his translations distinguish themselves:—

WESLEY'S.

Thou seest our weakness, Lord,
Our hearts are known to thee:
O lift thou up the sinking hand,
Confirm the feeble knee!
Let us in life and death,
Thy steadfast truth declare;
And publish with our latest breath
Thy love and guardian care.

MORAVIAN.

O Lord, thou seest our weakness,
Yet knowest what our hearts mean:
Against desponding slackness,
Our feeble knees sustain.
Till, and beyond death's valley,
Let us thy truth declare:
Yea, then emphatically,
Boast of thy guardian care.

Some other comparisons might be made between Mr. C. Wesley's translations from German hymns and those from the same originals found in the Moravian Hymn Book, which would sufficiently show that the Moravians *then* at least, had no translator into English verse at all comparable to him; and indeed they have sufficient taste generally to adopt his translations in preference. But this is no reason why he should lose the credit of his own admirable performances in this department. Respect to literary justice has drawn out this note to so great a length; and it was the more necessary to state the matter correctly, because Mr. Montgomery's "Psalmist" might in future mislead. The first editions of the hymns and sacred poems, by the Wesleys, viz., those of 1739, 1743, and 1745, in which most of the above hymns are found, with several others in the Moravian

Few persons ever wrote so much poetry of the sacred and devotional kind, as Mr. Charles Wesley. It amounts to forty-eight distinct publications of different sizes, from the duodecimo volume, to the pamphlet of one or two sheets. Besides what is published, several thick quarto volumes of poetry in MS. remain, chiefly consisting of brief illustrations or paraphrases of the leading texts in the Gospels and Acts of the Apostles, and not inferior to his "Short Hymns on the chief passages of the Old and New Testaments," which have passed through several editions. A few of his poems are playful, a few others are keenly satirical. He satirized his brother's ordinations, and the preachers; but, high churchman as he was, he is very unsparing in the use of his poetic whip upon the persecuting and irreligious clergy. Of this, some of his published, and several of his unpublished paraphrases, on passages of the Gospels, and the Acts of the Apostles, in which the persecuting deeds of the Scribes and Pharisees are recorded, afford some caustic specimens;* and sufficiently indicate that he did not bear the contumely and opposition of his high church brethren with the equanimity and gentleness of his brother John. He also took a part in the Calvinistic controversy, by writing his hymns or poems on God's universal love. But by far the greater part of his poetry was consecrated to promote the work of God in the heart. Never were its different branches, from the first awakening of the soul out of the sleep of sin, to its state of perfected holiness, with all its intermediate conflicts and exercises, more justly or scripturally expressed; and there is, perhaps, no uninspired book from which, as to "the deep things of God," so much is to be learned, as from his hymn book in use in the Methodist congregations. The funeral hymns in this collection have but little of the softness of sorrow—perhaps too little; but they are written in that fulness of faith, which exclaims over the open tomb, "Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." The hymns on the last day are characterized also by the same unflinching faith, which, rejoicing in the smile of the Judge, defies the wild uproar of elements, and the general conflagration itself. In several of these, Mr. Charles Wesley has admirably Christianized "the just man" of Horace, dreadless, amidst the ruins of a world:

"*Si fractus illabatur orbis*
Impavidum ferient ruinæ;"

placing the same fine thought in various aspects, and illustrating it by different circumstances. His hymns of invitation are sweet and persuasive; and those on justification by faith, admirably illustrative of that important doctrine. Of the value set upon this hymn book by the Methodist congregations, this is a sufficient proof, that above sixty thousand copies are sold yearly in the United Kingdom alone.† The number in the United States of America, must be considerably larger.

With reference to his brother's poetry, a remark is incidentally, and somewhat oddly introduced by Mr. Wesley, in his Journal of 1790, Jan. 28:

"I retired to Peckham, and at leisure hours read part of a very pretty trifle, the life of Mrs. Bellamy. Surely never did any since John Dryden study more

'To make vice pleasing, and damnation shine.'

than this lively and elegant writer. She has a fine imagination, a strong understanding, an easy style, improved by much reading; a fine, benevolent temper, and every qualification that could consist with a total ignorance of God: but God was not in all her thoughts. Abundance of anecdotes she inserts, which may be true or false. One of them, concerning Mr. Garrick, is curious: she says, 'When he was taking ship for England, a lady presented him with a parcel, which she desired him not to open

Hymn Book, are now become scarce, and in a few years may not be forthcoming to correct the error. For this reason it may also be noticed that Mr. Montgomery has inserted in his collection several hymns by Charles Wesley as the composition of "authors unknown." These, too, are found in the early editions of the Wesley hymns and poems, and in some later ones, as, "Come, let us who in Christ believe;" "Come, O thou all-victorious Lord;" "Fountain of being, source of good;" "God of my life, whose gracious power;" "Jesus my strength, my hope;" "Jesus, the name high over all;" "Leader of faithful souls, and guide;" "O that thou wouldst the heavens rent;" "Spirit of truth, come down;" "Thee, O my God and King;" "Thy ceaseless, unexhausted love;" and, "When quiet in my house I sit." There are two ways of accounting for Mr. Montgomery's want of information as to these hymns:—that he was not in possession of the early editions of hymns published by John and Charles Wesley;—and that some of the hymns in the hymn book in use amongst us, which he has ascribed to authors unknown, are parts of longer hymns, and were selected by Mr. John Wesley from his brother's poetry, sometimes from the middle or end of a piece, so that the first lines would not be found in the old indexes when consulted. Mr. Charles Wesley's hymns have not been unfrequently claimed for others, without any design to be unjust. In the Christian Observer, a few years ago, that exquisite production of one of his happiest moments, "Jesus lover of my soul," was assigned to Mr. Madan, although published by Mr. Charles Wesley in the year 1743; and the translation from the French, "Come, Saviour Jesus, from above," is found in the poetical works of Dr. John Byrom, published in 1773, although it appears in the Wesley "Hymns and Poems" of 1739. The probability is, that a copy of it was found among Byrom's papers, and so the editor of his poems concluded it to be his. A correct list of the different editions of the Hymns and Sacred Poems published by the Wesleys will be found in the last volume of Wesley's works, recently completed. The editions of 1739 are scarce, and it ought to be noticed that there are *two* distinct works published under the same title of "Hymns and Sacred Poems," each bearing that date. The hymn book now in use was compiled by Mr. John Wesley out of the preceding hymn books, of different sizes and editions, and from his brother's "Festival Hymns," "Scripture Hymns," &c. The whole underwent his severe criticism, and he abridged and corrected them with a taste and judgment which greatly increased their value.

* As almost all the family were poets, so they were all characterized by a vein of satire. This they appear to have inherited from their father, whose wit was both ready and pungent. The following is an instance, copied from the gentleman's Magazine, for the year 1802:—

"The authenticity of the following *extempore* grace by the Rev. Samuel Wesley, (father of the Rev. John,) formerly rector of Epworth, may be relied on. It is given on the authority of the late William Barnard, Esq. of Gainsborough, whose father, the preserver of John from the fire of 1707, was present at the time it was spoken, at Temple Belwood, after dinner. Mr. P., at whose house they dined, was a strange compound of avarice and oddity; many of his singularities are still remembered:

'Thanks for this feast, for tis no less
Than eating manna in the wilderness:
Here meagre famine bears controlless sway,
And ever drives each fainting wretch away.
Yet here, (O how beyond a saint's belief!)
We've seen the glories of a chine of beef;
Here chimneys smoke, which never smoked before,
And we have dined, where we shall dine no more.'"

The design of this odd extemporaneous effusion, we are bound to believe, was not to indulge in a levity, but to convey a useful reproof.

† As the number of hymns in this book, adapted for mixed congregations and festival occasions, was not thought sufficient, a supplement is now added; containing about an equal number of hymns, by Mr. Charles Wesley, and by other authors. Some of the best hymns he ever wrote are found in this smaller collection, chiefly on the festivals.

till he was at sea. When he did, he found Wesley's Hymns, which he immediately threw overboard.' I cannot believe it. I think Mr. G. had more sense. He knew my brother well. And he knew him to be not only far superior in learning, but in poetry, to Mr. Thomson, and all his theatrical writers put together: none of them can equal him, either in strong nervous sense, or purity and elegance of language. The musical compositions of his sons are not more excellent than the poetical ones of their father."

The last end of the truly venerable John Wesley was now also approaching. He was on his regular pastoral visit to Ireland, when he entered his eighty-seventh year, on which he remarks in his Journal. "This day I enter on my eighty-seventh year. I now find I grow old. 1. My sight is decayed, so that I cannot read a small print, unless in a strong light. 2. My strength is decayed, so that I walk much slower than I did some years since. 3. My memory of names, whether of persons or places, is decayed, till I stop a little to recollect them. What I should be afraid of is, if I took thought for the morrow, that my body should weigh down my mind, and create either stubbornness, by the decrease of my understanding, or peevishness, by the increase of bodily infirmities; but thou shalt answer for me, O Lord my God!"

Notwithstanding these infirmities, we find him still acting under the impression—"I must be about my Father's business." Although in comparison of his former rapidity of movement, he crept rather than ran; it was still in the same ceaseless course of service. After holding the Irish conference in Dublin, and the English conference at Leeds, in August, he returned to London; from thence he set out to Bristol, and proceeded on his usual tour through the west of England and Cornwall. Notwithstanding his regular visits to Cornwall, he appears, from some reason, not to have turned aside to Falmouth, since the time of his preaching there forty years before when he met with so violent a reception. He now paid that place a visit, and remarks—"The last time I was here, about forty years ago, I was taken prisoner by an immense mob, gaping and roaring like lions; but how is the tide turned! High and low now lined the streets from one end of the town to the other, out of stark love and kindness, gaping and staring as if the king were going by. In the evening I preached on the smooth top of the hill, at a small distance from the sea, to the largest congregation I have ever seen in Cornwall, except in or near Redruth; and such a time I have not known before, since I returned from Ireland. God moved wonderfully on the hearts of the people, who all seemed to know the day of their visitation."

From Cornwall he returned by way of Bristol and Bath to London. In the early part of the next year, we find him again at Bristol; from whence he proceeded, preaching at several of the intermediate towns, to Birmingham; and from thence through Staffordshire to Madeley, where we find the following affecting entry in his Journal:—

"At nine I preached to a select congregation on the deep things of God; and in the evening on, 'He is able to save unto the uttermost of all them that come unto God through him.' Friday, 26, I finished my sermon on the 'Wedding garment;' perhaps the last that I shall write. My eyes are now waxed dim. My natural force is abated; however, while I can, I would fain do a little for God, before I drop into the dust."

The societies in Cheshire, Lancashire, and the North of England, once more, and for the last time, saw the man, to whom, under God, they owed their religious existence. On his return southward, he passed through the East Riding of Yorkshire, to Hull: preaching in every place as on the brink of eternity. He also visited Epworth, and various parts of Lincolnshire; and, upon attaining his eighty-eighth year, has the following reflections:—

"This day I enter into my eighty-eighth year. For above eighty-six years, I found none of the infirmities of old age; my eyes did not wax dim, neither was my natural strength abated; but last August, I found almost a sudden change: my eyes were so dim that no glasses would help me; my strength likewise now quite forsook me, and probably will not return in this world; but I feel no pain from head to foot: only it seems, nature is exhausted, and, humanly speaking, will sink more and more, till

'The weary springs of life stand still at last.'"

"This," says Dr. Whitehead, "at length was literally the case; the death of Mr. Wesley, like that of his brother Charles, being one of those rare instances in which nature, drooping under the load of years, sinks by a gentle decay. For several years preceding his death, this decay was, perhaps, more visible to others than to himself, particularly by a more frequent disposition to sleep during the day, by a growing defect in memory, a faculty he once possessed in a high degree of perfection, and by a general diminution of the vigor and agility he had so long enjoyed. His labors, however, suffered little interruption; and when the summons came, it found him, as he always wished it should, in the *harness*, still occupied in his Master's work!"

Still his Journal records his regular visitation of the principal places where societies existed, and exhibits the same variety and raciness of remark on men and books, and other subjects, although writing must, at that time, have become exceedingly difficult to him from the failure of his sight. This most interesting record of unparalleled labors "in the gospel" was, for this reason, it is presumed, discontinued, and closed, on Sunday, October 24th, 1790, when he states that he preached twice at Spitalfields church. He continued however, during the autumn and winter, to visit various places till February, continually praying, "Lord, let me not live to be useless." The following account of his last days is taken from the memoir prefixed to the edition of his works by the Rev. Joseph Benson, and is there inserted as a proper close to his Journal:—

"He preached, as usual, in different places in London and its vicinity, generally meeting the society after preaching in each place, and exhorting them to *love as brethren, to fear God, and honor the king*, which he wished them to consider as his last advice. He then usually, if not invariably, concluded, with giving out that verse—

O that, without a ling'ring groan
I may the welcome word receive;
My body with my charge lay down,
And cease at once to work and live.'

"He proceeded in this way till the usual time of his leaving London approached, when, with a view to take his accustomed journey through Ireland or Scotland, he sent his chaise and horses before him to Bristol, and took places for himself and his friend in the Bath coach. But his mind, with all its vigor could no longer uphold his worn-out and sinking body. Its powers ceased, although, by slow and almost imperceptible degrees, to perform their sundry offices, until, as he often expressed himself,

'The weary wheels of life stood still at last.'

"Thursday, February 17, 1791, he preached at Lambeth; but, on his return, seemed much indisposed, and said, he had taken cold. The next day, however, he read and wrote as usual; and in the

evening, preached at Chelsea, from "The king's business requires haste," although with some difficulty, having a high degree of fever upon him. Indeed he was obliged to stop once or twice, informing the people that his cold so affected his voice as to prevent his speaking without those necessary pauses. On Saturday he still persevered in his usual employments, though, to those about him, his complaints seemed evidently increasing. He dined at Islington, and at dinner desired a friend to read to him four chapters out of the book of Job, viz. from the fourth to the seventh inclusive. On Sunday he rose early, according to custom, but quite unfit for any of his usual Sabbath-day's exercises. At seven o'clock he was obliged to lie down, and slept between three and four hours. When he awoke, he said, "I have not had such a comfortable sleep this fortnight past." In the afternoon he lay down again and slept an hour or two. Afterwards two of his own discourses on our Lord's sermon on the mount were read to him, and in the evening he came down to supper.

"Monday, the 21st, he seemed much better; and though his friends tried to dissuade him from it, he would keep an engagement, made some time before, to dine at Twickenham. In his way thither he called on Lady Mary Fitzgerald: the conversation was truly profitable, and well became a last visit. On Tuesday he went on with his usual work, preached in the evening at the chapel in the City-road, and seemed much better than he had been for some days. On Wednesday he went to Leatherhead, and preached to a small company on, "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near." This proved to be his last sermon: here ended the public labors of this great minister of Jesus Christ. On Thursday he paid a visit to Mr. Wolff's family at Balham, where he was cheerful, and seemed nearly as well as usual, till Friday, about breakfast time, when he grew very heavy. About eleven o'clock he returned home, extremely ill. His friends were struck with the manner of his getting out of the carriage, and still more with his apparent weakness when he went up stairs and sat down in his chair. He now desired to be left alone, and not to be interrupted by any one, for half an hour. When that time was expired, some mulled wine was brought him, of which he drank a little. In a few minutes he threw it up, and said, 'I must lie down.' His friends were now alarmed, and Dr. Whitehead was immediately sent for. On his entering the room, he said, in a cheerful voice, 'doctor, they are more afraid than hurt.' Most of this day he lay in bed, had a quick pulse, with a considerable degree of fever and stupor. And Saturday, the 26th, he continued in much the same state; taking very little either of medicine or nourishment.

"Sunday morning he seemed much better, got up, and took a cup of tea. Sitting in his chair, he looked quite cheerful, and repeated the latter part of the verse, in his brother Charles' Scripture Hymns, on '*Forsake me not when my strength faileth*,' viz.—

'Till glad I lay this body down,
Thy servant, Lord, attend;
And, O! my life of mercy crown
With a triumphant end.'

Soon after, in a most emphatical manner, he said, 'our friend Lazarus sleepeth.' Exerting himself to converse with some friends, he was soon fatigued, and obliged to lie down. After lying quiet some time, he looked up, and said, 'speak to me; I cannot speak.' On which one of the company said, 'shall we pray with you, sir?' He earnestly replied, 'yes.' And while they prayed, his whole soul seemed engaged with God for an answer, and his hearty *amen* showed that he perfectly understood what was said. About half an hour after, he said, 'there is no need of more; when at Bristol my words were,

'I the chief of sinners am,
But Jesus died for me.'*

"One said, 'is this the present language of your heart, and do you now feel as you did then?' He replied 'yes.' When the same person repeated,

'Bold I approach the eternal throne,
And claim the crown, through Christ, my own;'

and added, ''tis enough. He our precious Immanuel has purchased, has promised, all;' he earnestly replied, 'He is all! He is all!' After this the fever was very high, and at times affected his recollection; but even then, though his head was subject to a temporary derangement, his heart seemed wholly engaged in his Master's work. In the evening he got up again, and, while sitting in his chair, he said, 'how necessary it is for every one to be on the right foundation!

'I the chief of sinners am,
But Jesus died for me!'

"Monday, the 28th, his weakness increased. He slept most of the day, and spoke but little; yet that little testified how much his whole heart was taken up in the care of the societies, the glory of God, and the promotion of the things pertaining to that kingdom to which he was hastening. Once he said, in a low but distinct manner, 'there is no way into the holiest, but by the blood of Jesus.' He afterwards inquired what the words were from which he had preached a little before at Hampstead. Being told they were these, 'ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich:' he replied, 'that is the foundation, the only foundation; there is no other.' This day Dr. Whitehead desired he might be asked, if he would have any other physician called in to attend him; but this he absolutely refused. It is remarkable that he suffered very little pain, never complaining of any during his illness, but once of a pain in his left breast. This was a restless night. Tuesday morning he sang two verses of a hymn: then lying still, as if to recover strength, he called for pen and ink; but when they were brought, he could not write. A person said, 'let me write for you, sir: tell me what you would say.' He replied, 'nothing, but that God is with us.' In the forenoon he said, 'I will get up.' While they were preparing his clothes, he broke out in a manner which, considering his extreme weakness, astonished all present, in singing,

'I'll praise my Maker while I've breath,
And when my voice is lost in death,
Praise shall employ my nobler powers.

* At the Bristol conference in 1783, Mr. Wesley was taken very ill: neither he nor his friends thought he could recover. From the nature of his complaint, he supposed a spasm would seize his stomach, and, probably, occasion sudden death. Under these views of his situation, he said to Mr. Bradford, "I have been reflecting on my past life: I have been wandering up and down, between fifty and sixty years, endeavoring, in my poor way, to do a little good to my fellow-creatures: and now it is probable, that there are but a few steps between me and death; and what have I to trust to for salvation? I can see nothing which I have done or suffered, that will bear looking at. I have no other plea than this,

'I the chief of sinners am,
But Jesus died for me.'"

The sentiment here expressed, and his reference to it in his last sickness, plainly show how steadily he had persevered in the same views of the gospel.

My days of praise shall ne'er be past,
While life, and thought, and being last,
Or immortality endures!'

"Having got him into his chair, they observed him change for death. But he, regardless of his dying body, said, with a weak voice, 'Lord, thou givest strength to those that can speak, and to those who cannot. Speak, Lord, to all our hearts, and let them know that thou loosest tongues.' He then sung,

'To Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
Who sweetly all agree—'

Here his voice failed. After gasping for breath, he said, 'now we have done all.' He was then laid in the bed, from which he rose no more. After resting a little he called to those who were with him to 'pray and praise.' They kneeled down, and the room seemed to be filled with the divine presence. A little after, he said, 'let me be buried in nothing but what is woollen, and let my corpse be carried into the chapel.' Then, as if he had done with all below, he again begged they would pray and praise. Several friends that were in the house being called up, they all kneeled down again to prayer, at which time his fervor of spirit was manifest to every one present. But in particular parts of the prayer, his whole soul seemed to be engaged in a manner which evidently showed how ardently he longed for the full accomplishment of their united desires. And when one of the preachers was praying in a very expressive manner, that if God were about to take away their father to his eternal rest, He would be pleased to continue and increase his blessing upon the doctrine and discipline which He had long made his servant the means of propagating and establishing in the world; such a degree of fervor accompanied his loud *amen*, as was every way expressive of his soul's being engaged in the answer of the petitions. On rising from their knees, he took hold of all their hands, and, with the utmost placidness, saluted them, and said, 'Farewell, farewell.'

"A little after, a person coming in, he strove to speak, but could not. Finding they could not understand him, he paused a little, and then, with all the remaining strength he had, cried out, *The best of all is, God is with us;* and, soon after lifting up his dying arm in token of victory and raising his feeble voice with a holy triumph no to be expressed, he again repeated the heart-reviving words, *The best of all is, God is with us.* Being told that his brother's widow was come, he said, 'He giveth his servants rest.' He thanked her, as she pressed his hand, and affectionately endeavored to kiss her. On his lips being wetted, he said, 'We thank thee, O Lord, for these and all thy mercies: bless the church and king; and grant us truth and peace, through Jesus Christ our Lord, for ever and ever!' At another time he said, 'He causeth his servants to lie down in peace.' Then pausing a little, he cried, 'The clouds drop fatness!' and soon after, 'The Lord is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge!' He then called those present to prayer: and though he was greatly exhausted, he appeared still more fervent in spirit. These exertions were, however, too much for his feeble frame; and most of the night following, though he often attempted to repeat the psalm before mentioned, he could only utter,

'I'll praise—I'll praise!'

"On Wednesday morning, the closing scene drew near. Mr. Bradford, his faithful friend, prayed with him, and the last words he was heard to articulate were, 'Farewell!' A few minutes before ten, while several of his friends were kneeling around his bed, without a lingering groan, this man of God, this beloved pastor of thousands, entered into the joy of his Lord.

"He was in the eighty-eighth year of his age, had been sixty-five years in the ministry; and the preceding pages will be a lasting memorial of his uncommon zeal, diligence, and usefulness, in his Master's work, for more than half a century. His death was an admirable close to so laborious and useful a life.

"At the desire of many of his friends his corpse was placed in the new chapel, and remained there the day before his interment. His face during that time had a heavenly smile upon it, and a beauty which was admired by all that saw it.

"March the 9th was the day appointed for his interment. The preachers then in London requested that Dr. Whitehead should deliver the funeral discourse; and the executors afterwards approved of the appointment. The intention was to carry the corpse into the chapel, and place it in a raised situation before the pulpit during the service. But the crowds which came to see the body while it lay in the coffin, both in the private house, and especially in the chapel, the day before his funeral, were so great, that his friends were apprehensive of a tumult, if they should adopt the plan first intended. It was therefore resolved the evening before, to bury him between five and six in the morning. Though the time of notice to his friends was short, and the design itself was spoken of with great caution, yet a considerable number of persons attended at that early hour. The late Rev. Mr. Richardson, who now lies with him in the same vault, read the funeral service in a manner that made it peculiarly affecting. When he came to that part of it, 'Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God to take unto himself the soul of our dear *brother*,' &c., he substituted, with the most tender emphasis, the epithet *father*, instead of *brother*, which had so powerful an effect on the congregation, that from silent tears they seemed universally to burst out into loud weeping.

INSCRIPTION ON HIS COFFIN.

JOHANNES WESLEY, A. M
Olim Soc. Coll. Lin. Oxon.
Ob. 2do. die Martii, 1791.
An. Æt. 88.*

"The discourse, by Dr. Whitehead, was delivered in the chapel at the hour appointed in the forenoon, to an astonishing multitude of people; among whom were many ministers of the gospel, both of the establishment and dissenters. The audience was still and solemn as night; and all seemed to carry away with them enlarged views of Mr. Wesley's character, and serious impressions of the importance of religion.

The following is the inscription on the marble tablet erected to his memory in the chapel, City-road:—

SACRED TO THE MEMORY
OF THE REV. JOHN WESLEY, M. A.
SOMETIME FELLOW OF LINCOLN COLLEGE, OXFORD;

A Man in Learning and sincere Piety
Scarcely inferior to any;
In Zeal, Ministerial Labors, and
Extensive Usefulness,
Superior, perhaps, to all Men,
Since the Days of ST. PAUL.

Regardless of Fatigue, personal Danger,
And Disgrace,
He went out into the highways and hedges,
Calling Sinners to Repentance,
And Publishing the GOSPEL of Peace.

* "John Wesley, Master of Arts, formerly Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford, died on the second day of March, 1791, in the eighty-eighth year of his age."

He was the Founder of the Methodist Societies,
And the chief promoter and Patron
Of the Plan of Itinerant preaching,
Which he extended through Great Britain
And Ireland,
The West Indies and America,
With unexampled success.

He was born the 17th of June, 1703;
And died the 2d of March, 1791,
In sure and certain hope of Eternal Life,
Through the Atonement and Mediation of a
Crucified Saviour.

He was Sixty-five Years in the Ministry,
And Fifty-two an Itinerant Preacher.
He lived to see, in these Kingdoms only,
About three hundred Itinerant,
And one thousand Local Preachers,
Raised up from the midst of his own People;
And eighty thousand Persons
In the Societies under his care.

His Name will be ever had in grateful remembrance
By all who rejoice in the universal Spread
Of the Gospel of Christ.

Soli Deo Gloria.

It would be superfluous in closing this account of a man at once so extraordinary and so truly great, for me to attempt a delineation of his character, since this has been done so ably that nothing can easily be added, with good effect. I shall therefore insert Dr. Whitehead's own summary, with notices by others who were personally acquainted with him. Taken together they transmit an interesting and instructive picture of the founder of Methodism, to future ages.

Dr. Whitehead observes:—

"Some persons have affected to insinuate that Mr. Wesley was a man of slender capacity; but certainly with great injustice. His apprehension was clear, his penetration quick, and his judgment discriminative and sound; of which his controversial writings, and his celebrity in the stations he held at Oxford, when young, are sufficient proofs. In governing a large body of preachers and people, of various habits, interests, and principles, with astonishing calmness and regularity for many years, he showed a strong and capacious mind, that could comprehend and combine together a vast variety of circumstances, and direct their influence through the great body he governed. As a scholar, he certainly held a conspicuous rank. He was a critic in the Latin and Greek classics; and was well acquainted with the Hebrew, and with several modern tongues. But the Greek was his favorite language, in which his knowledge was extensive and accurate. At college, he had studied Euclid, Keil, Sir Isaac Newton's Optics, &c.; but he never entered far into the more abstruse parts, or the higher branches, of the mathematics; finding they would fascinate his mind, absorb his attention, and divert him from the pursuit of the more important objects of his own profession.

"Natural history was a field in which he walked at every opportunity, and contemplated with infinite pleasure the wisdom, the power, and the goodness of God, in the structure of natural bodies, and in the various instincts and habits of the animal creation. But he was obliged to view these wonderful works of God, in the labors and records of others; his various and continual employments of a higher nature, not permitting him to make experiments and observations for himself.*

"As a writer, Mr. Wesley certainly possessed talents, sufficient to procure him considerable reputation. But he did not write for fame; his object was chiefly to instruct and benefit that numerous class of people who have little learning, little money, and but little time to spare for reading. In all his writings he constantly kept these circumstances in view. Content with doing good, he used no trappings merely to please, or to gain applause. The distinguishing character of his style is brevity and perspicuity. He never lost sight of the rule which Horace gives,

> '*Est brevitate opus, ut currat sententia, neu se*
> *Impediat verbis lassas onerantibus aures.*'
>
> 'Concise your diction, let your sense be clear,
> Nor with a weight of words fatigue the ear.'

In all his writings his words are well chosen, *pure*, *proper* to his subject, and *precise* in their meaning. His sentences commonly have the attributes of clearness, unity, and strength: and whenever he took time, and gave the necessary attention to his subject, both his manner of treating it, and his style, show the hand of a master.*

"The following is a just character to Mr. Wesley as a preacher: 'His attitude in the pulpit was graceful and easy: his action calm and natural, yet pleasing and expressive: his voice not loud, but clear and manly: his style neat, simple, and perspicuous; and admirably adapted to the capacity of his hearers. His discourses, in point of composition, were extremely different on different occasions. When he gave himself sufficient time for preparation, he succeeded; but when he did not, he frequently failed.' It was indeed manifest to his friends for many years before he died, that his employments were too many, and that he preached too often, to appear with the same advantage at all times in the pulpit. His sermons were always short: he was seldom more than half an hour in delivering a discourse, sometimes not so long. His subjects were judiciously chosen: instructive and interesting to the audience, and well adapted to gain attention and warm the heart.

"The labors of Mr. Wesley in the work of the ministry, for fifty years together, were without precedent. During this period, he travelled about four thousand five hundred miles every year, one year with another, chiefly on horseback. It had been impossible for him to accomplish this almost incredible degree of exertion, without great punctuality and care in the management of his time. He had stated hours for every purpose: and his only relaxation was a change of employment. His rules were like the laws of the Medes and Persians, absolute and irrevocable. He had a peculiar pleasure in reading and study, and every literary man knows how apt this passion is to make him encroach on the time which ought to be employed in other duties: he had a high relish for conversation, especially with pious, learned, and sensible men: but whenever the hour came when he was to set out on a journey, he instantly quitted the company with which he might be engaged, without any apparent reluctance. For fifty-two years, or upwards, he generally delivered two, frequently three or four, sermons in a day. But calculating only two sermons a-day, and allowing, as a writer of his life has done, fifty annually for extraordinary occasions, the whole number of sermons he preached during this period will be forty thousand five hundred and sixty. To these must be added, an infinite number of exhortations to the societies after preaching, and in other occasional meetings at which he assisted.

* He, however, employed much leisure time whilst at college in the study of anatomy and medicine.

* His treatise on Original Sin; his appeals, and some of his sermons, are instances of finished and careful composition; and are equally to be admired for clearness of method, and the force of many passages which are truly eloquent.

"In social life, Mr. Wesley was lively and conversational. He had the talent of making himself exceedingly agreeable in company: and having been much accustomed to society, the rules of good breeding were habitual to him. The abstraction of a scholar did not appear in his behavior; but he was attentive and polite. He spoke a good deal where he saw it was expected, which was almost always the case wherever he visited. Having seen much of the world in his travels, and read more, his mind was stored with an infinite number of anecdotes and observations; and the manner in which he related them was no inconsiderable addition to the entertainment and instruction they afforded. It was impossible to be long in his company, either in public or private, without partaking of his placid cheerfulness, which was not abated by the infirmities of age, or the approach of death; but was as conspicuous at fourscore and seven, as at one and twenty.

"A remarkable feature in Mr. Wesley's character, was his placability. Having an active, penetrating mind, his temper was naturally quick, and even tending to sharpness. The influence of religion, and the constant habit of patient thinking, had in a great measure, corrected this disposition. In general he preserved an air of sedateness and tranquillity, which formed a striking contrast to the liveliness conspicuous in all his actions. Persecution, abuse, and injury, he bore from strangers, not only without anger, but without any apparent emotion; and what he said of himself was strictly true, that he had a great facility in forgiving injuries. Submission, on the part of the offender, presently disarmed his resentment, and he would treat him with great kindness and cordiality. No man was ever more free from jealousy or suspicion than Mr. Wesley, or laid himself more open to the impositions of others. Though his confidence was often abused, and circumstances sometimes took place which would have made almost any other man suspicious, yet he suspected no one; nor was it easy to convince him that any one had intentionally deceived him; and when facts had demonstrated that this was actually the case, he would allow no more than that it was so in that single instance. If the person acknowledged his fault, he believed him sincere, and would trust him again. If we view this temper of his mind in connection with the circumstance that his most private papers lay open to the inspection of those constantly about him, it will afford as strong a proof as can well be given, of the integrity of his own mind; and that he was at the farthest distance from any intention to deceive, or impose upon others.

"The temperance of Mr. Wesley was extraordinary. When at college he carried this so far, that his friends thought him blameable. But he never imposed upon others the same degree of rigor he exercised upon himself. He only said, I must be the best judge of what is hurtful or beneficial to me. Among other things, he was remarkable for moderation in sleep; and his notion of it cannot be better explained, than in his own words. 'Healthy men,' says he, 'require above six hours' sleep; healthy women, a little above seven, in four and twenty. If any one desires to know exactly what quantity of sleep his own constitution requires, he may very easily make the experiment, which I made about sixty years ago. I then waked every night about twelve or one, and lay awake for some time. I readily concluded, that this arose from my being in bed longer than nature required. To be satisfied, I procured an alarum, which waked me the next morning at seven (nearly an hour earlier than I rose the day before,) yet I lay awake again at night. The second morning I rose at six; but notwithstanding this, I lay awake the second night. The third morning I rose at five; but nevertheless, I lay awake the third night. The fourth morning I rose at four, as by the grace of God, I have done ever since: and I lay awake no more. And I do not now lie awake, taking the year round, a quarter of an hour together in a month. By the same experiment, rising earlier and earlier every morning, may any one find how much sleep he wants.'

"It must, however, be observed, that, for many years before his death, Mr. Wesley slept more or less during the day; and his great readiness to fall asleep at any time when fatigued, was a considerable means of keeping up his strength, and enabling him to go through so much labor. He never could endure to sleep on a soft bed. Even in the latter part of life, when the infirmities of age pressed upon him, his whole conduct was at the greatest distance from softness or effeminacy.

"A writer of Mr. Wesley's life, from whom some observations respecting his general character have already been taken, has farther observed, perhaps the most charitable man in England, was Mr. Wesley. His liberality to the poor, knew no bounds but an empty pocket. He gave away, not merely a certain part of his income, but all that he had: his own wants provided for, he devoted all the rest to the necessities of others. He entered upon this good work at a very early period. We are told, that, 'when he had thirty pounds a year, he lived on twenty-eight, and gave away forty shillings. The next year, receiving sixty pounds, he still lived on twenty-eight, and gave away two and thirty. The third year he received ninety pounds, and gave away sixty-two. The fourth year he received one hundred and twenty pounds. Still he lived on twenty-eight, and gave to the poor ninety-two.' In this ratio he proceeded during the rest of his life; and, in the course of fifty years, it has been supposed, he gave away between twenty and thirty thousand pounds;* a great part of which, most other men would have put out at interest, upon good security.

"In the distribution of his money, Mr. Wesley was as disinterested as he was charitable. He had no regard to family connections, nor even to the wants of the preachers who labored with him, in preference to strangers. He knew that these had some friends; and he thought that the poor destitute stranger might have none, and therefore had the first claim on his liberality. When a trifling legacy has been paid him, he has been known to dispose of it in some charitable way before he slept, that it might not remain his own property for one night. He often declared that his own hands should be his executors; and though he gained all he could by his publications, and saved all he could, not wasting so much as a sheet of paper; yet, by giving all he could, he was preserved from *laying up treasures upon earth*. He had said in print, that, if he died worth more than ten pounds, independent of his books, and the arrears of his fellowship, which he then held, he would give the world leave to call him 'a thief and a robber.' This declaration, made in the integrity of his heart, and the height of his zeal, laid him under some inconveniences afterwards, from circumstances which he could not at that time foresee. Yet in this, as all his friends expected, he literally kept his word, as far as human foresight could reach. His chaise and horses, his clothes, and a few trifles of that kind, were all, his books excepted, that he left at his death. Whatever might be the value of his books, this altered not the case, as they were placed in the hands of trustees, and

* Money chiefly arising from the constant and large sale of his writings, and the works he abridged.

the profits arising from the sale of them were to be applied to the use and benefit of the conference for public purposes; reserving only a few legacies and a rent-charge of eighty-five pounds a year to be paid to his brother's widow, which was in fact a debt, in consideration for the copy-right of his brother's hymns.

"Among the other excellencies of Mr. Wesley, his moderation in controversy deserves to be noticed. Writers of controversy too often forget, that their own character is intimately connected with the manner in which they treat others; and if they have no regard for their opponents, they ought to have some respect for themselves. When a writer becomes personal and abusive, it affords a fair presumption against his arguments, and tends to put his readers on their guard. Most of Mr. Wesley's opponents were of this description; their *railing* was much more violent than their *reasons* were cogent. Mr. Wesley kept his temper, and wrote like a Christian, a gentleman, and a scholar. He might have taken the words of the excellent Hooker, as a motto to his polemical tracts, 'To your *railing* I say *nothing*; for your *reasons* take what follows.' He admired the temper in which Mr. Law wrote controversy; only in some instances Mr. Law shows a contempt for his opponent, which Mr. Wesley thought highly improper."

To these remarks of Dr. Whitehead may be added two or three sketches of Mr. Wesley's character drawn up by different persons, and printed soon after his death. The first is anonymous:—

"Now that Mr. John Wesley has finished his course upon earth, I may be allowed to estimate his character, and the loss the world has sustained by his death. Upon a fair account, it appears to be such, as not only annihilates all the reproaches that have been cast upon him; but such as does honor to mankind, at the same time that it reproaches them. His natural and acquired abilities were both of the highest rank. His apprehension was lively and distinct; his learning extensive. His judgment, though not infallible, was, in most cases, excellent. His mind was steadfast and resolved. His elocution was ready and clear, graceful and easy, accurate and unaffected. As a writer, his style, though unstudied, and flowing with natural ease, yet for accuracy and perspicuity was such as may vie with the best writers in the English language. Though his temper was naturally warm, his manners were gentle, simple, and uniform. Never were such happy talents better seconded by an unrelenting perseverance in those courses which his singular endowments, and his zealous love to the interests of mankind, marked out for him. His constitution was excellent: and never was a constitution less abused, less spared, or more excellently applied, in an exact subservience to the faculties of his mind. His labors and studies were wonderful. The latter were not confined to theology only, but extended to every subject that tended either to the improvement or the rational entertainment of the mind. If we consider his reading by itself, his writings and his other labors by themselves, any one of them will appear sufficient to have kept a person of ordinary application busy during his whole life. In short, the transactions of his life could never have been performed, without the utmost exertion of two qualities, which depended, not upon his capacity, but on the uniform steadfastness of his resolution. These were inflexible temperance, and unexampled economy of time. In these he was a pattern to the age he lived in; and an example, to what a surprising extent a man may render himself useful in his generation, by temperance and punctuality. His friends and followers have no reason to be ashamed of the name of Methodist, which he has entailed upon them: as, for an uninterrupted course of years, he has given the world an instance of the possibility of living without wasting a single hour; and of the advantage of a regular distribution of time, in discharging the important duties and purposes of life. Few ages have more needed such a public testimony to the value of time; and perhaps none have had a more conspicuous example of the perfection to which the improvement of it may be carried.

"As a minister, his labors were unparalleled, and such as nothing could have supported him under but the warmest zeal for the doctrine he taught, and for the eternal interests of mankind. He studied to be gentle, yet vigilant and faithful towards all. He possessed himself in patience, and preserved himself unprovoked, nay, even unruffled, in the midst of persecution, reproach, and all manner of abuse both of his person and name. But let his own works praise him. He now enjoys the fruits of his labors, and that praise which he sought, not of men, but of God.

"To finish the portrait. Examine the general tenor of his life, and it will be found self-evidently inconsistent with his being a slave to any one passion or pursuit, that can fix a blemish on his character. Of what use were the accumulation of wealth to him, who, through his whole course, never allowed himself to taste the repose of indolence, or even of the common indulgence in the use of the necessaries of life? Free from the partiality of any party, the sketcher of this excellent character, with a friendly tear, pays it as a just tribute to the memory of so great and good a man, who, when alive was his friend."

Of Mr. Wesley, Mr. Alexander Knox says:—

"Very lately, I had an opportunity, for some days together, of observing Mr. Wesley with attention. I endeavored to consider him, not so much with the eye of a friend, as with the impartiality of a philosopher; and I must declare, every hour I spent in his company afforded me fresh reasons for esteem and veneration. So fine an old man I never saw. The happiness of his mind beamed forth in his countenance. Every look showed how fully he enjoyed 'the gay remembrance of a life well spent;' and wherever he went, he diffused a portion of his own felicity. Easy and affable in his demeanor, he accommodated himself to every sort of company, and showed how happily the most finished courtesy may be blended with the most perfect piety. In his conversation, we might be at a loss whether to admire most, his fine classical taste, his extensive knowledge of men and things, or his overflowing goodness of heart. While the grave and serious were charmed with his wisdom, his sportive sallies of innocent mirth delighted even the young and thoughtless; and both saw, in his uninterrupted cheerfulness, the excellency of true religion. No cynical remarks on the levity of youth embittered his discourse; no applausive retrospect to past times marked his present discontent. In him, even old age appeared delightful, like an evening without a cloud; and it was impossible to observe him, without wishing fervently, 'May my latter end be like his!'

"But I find myself unequal to the task of delineating such a character. What I have said may to some appear as panegyric; but there are numbers, and those of taste and discernment too, who can bear witness to the truth, though by no means to the perfectness, of the sketch I have attempted. With such I have been frequently in his company; and every one of them, I am persuaded, would subscribe to all I have said. For my own part, I never was so happy as while with him, and scarcely ever felt more poignant regret than at parting from him;

for, well I knew, 'I ne'er should look upon his like again.'"

The following account of Mr. Wesley appeared soon after his death in a very respectable publication; and was afterwards inserted in Woodfall's Diary, London, June 17, 1791:—

"His indefatigable zeal in the discharge of his duty has been long witnessed by the world; but, as mankind are not always inclined to put a generous construction on the exertions of singular talents, his motives were imputed to the love of popularity, ambition, and lucre. It now appears that he was actuated by a disinterested regard to the immortal interests of mankind. He labored, and studied, and preached, and wrote, to propagate what he believed to be the gospel of Christ. The intervals of these engagements were employed in governing and regulating the concerns of his numerous societies; assisting the necessities, solving the difficulties, and soothing the afflictions of his hearers. He observed so rigid a temperance, and allowed himself so little repose, that he seemed to be above the infirmities of nature, and to act independent of the earthly tenement he occupied. The recital of the occurrences of every day of his life would be the greatest encomium.

"Had he loved wealth, he might have accumulated it without bounds. Had he been fond of power, his influence would have been worth courting by any party. I do not say he was without ambition; he had that which Christianity need not blush at, and which virtue is proud to confess. I do not mean that which is gratified by splendor and large possessions; but that which commands the hearts and affections, the homage and gratitude, of thousands. For him they felt sentiments of veneration, only inferior to those which they paid to Heaven: to him they looked as their father, their benefactor, their guide to glory and immortality: for him they fell prostrate before God, with prayers and tears, to spare his doom, and prolong his stay. Such a recompense as this is sufficient to repay the toils of the longest life. Short of this, greatness is contemptible impotence. Before this, lofty prelates bow, and princes hide their diminished heads.

"His zeal was not a transient blaze, but a steady and constant flame. The ardor of his spirit was neither damped by difficulty, nor subdued by age. This was ascribed by himself to the power of divine grace; by the world, to *enthusiasm*. Be it what it will, it is what philosophers must envy, and infidels respect; it is that which gives energy to the soul, and without which there can be no greatness or heroism.

"Why should we condemn that in religion, which we applaud in every other profession and pursuit? He had a vigor and elevation of mind, which nothing but the belief of the divine favor and presence could inspire. This threw a lustre round his infirmities, changed his bed of sickness into a triumphal car, and made his exit resemble an apotheosis rather than a dissolution.

"He was qualified to excel in every branch of literature: he was well versed in the learned tongues, in metaphysics, in oratory, in logic, in criticism, and every requisite of a Christian minister. His style was nervous, clear, and manly; his preaching was pathetic and persuasive; his Journals are artless and interesting; and his compositions and compilations to promote knowledge and piety, were almost innumerable.

"I do not say he was without faults, or above mistakes; but they were lost in the multitude of his excellencies and virtues.

"To gain the admiration of an ignorant and superstitious age, requires only a little artifice and address; to stand the test of these times, when all pretensions to sanctity are stigmatized as hypocrisy, is a proof of genuine piety and real usefulness. His great object was, to revive the obsolete doctrines and extinguished spirit of the church of England; and they, who are its friends, cannot be his enemies. Yet for this he was treated as a fanatic and impostor, and exposed to every species of slander and persecution. Even bishops and dignitaries entered the lists against him; but he never declined the combat, and generally proved victorious. He appealed to the homilies, the articles, and the Scriptures, as vouchers for his doctrine; and they who could not decide upon the merits of the controversy, were witnesses of the effects of his labors; and they judged of the tree by its fruit. It is true, he did not succeed much in the higher walks of life; but that impeached his cause no more than it did that of the first planters of the gospel. However, if he had been capable of assuming vanity on that score, he might have ranked among his friends some persons of the first distinction, who would have done honor to any party. After surviving almost all his adversaries, and acquiring respect among those who were the most distant from his principles, he lived to see the plant he had reared, spreading its branches far and wide, and inviting not only these kingdoms, but the Western world, to repose under its shade. No sect, since the first ages of Christianity, could boast a founder of such extensive talents and endowments. If he had been a candidate for literary fame, he might have succeeded to his utmost wishes; but he sought not the praise of man; he regarded learning only as the instrument of usefulness. The great purpose of his life was doing good. For this he relinquished all honor and preferment; to this he dedicated all his powers of body and mind; at all times and in all places, in season and out of season, by gentleness, by terror, by argument, by persuasion, by reason, by interest, by every motive and every inducement, he strove, with unwearied assiduity, to turn men from the error of their ways, and awaken them to virtue and religion. To the bed of sickness, or the couch of prosperity; in the prison, the hospital, the house of mourning, or the house of feasting, wherever there was a friend to serve, or a soul to save, he readily repaired; to administer assistance or advice, reproof or consolation. He thought no office too humiliating, no condescension too low, no undertaking too arduous, to reclaim the meanest of God's offspring. The souls of all men were equally precious in his sight, and the value of an immortal creature beyond all estimation. He penetrated the abodes of wretchedness and ignorance, to rescue the profligate from perdition; and he communicated the light of life to those who sat in darkness and the shadow of death. He changed the outcasts of society into useful members; civilized even savages, and filled those lips with prayer and praise that had been accustomed only to oaths and imprecations. But as the strongest religious impressions are apt to become languid, without discipline and practice, he divided his people into classes and bands, according to their attainments. He appointed frequent meetings for prayer and conversation, where they gave an account of their experience, their hopes and fears, their joys and troubles; by which means they were united to each other, and to their common profession. They became sentinels upon each other's conduct, and securities for each other's character. Thus the seeds he sowed sprang up and flourished, bearing the rich fruits of every grace and virtue. Thus he governed and preserved his numerous societies, watching their improvement with a paternal care, and encouraging them to be faithful to the end.

"But I will not attempt to draw his full character, nor to estimate the extent of his labors and ser-

vices. They will be best known when he shall deliver up his commission into the hands of his great Master."

The following is a description of Mr. Wesley's person:—

"The figure of Mr. Wesley was remarkable. His stature was low; his habit of body, in every period of life, the reverse of corpulent, and expressive of strict temperance and continual exercise; and, notwithstanding his small size, his step was firm, his appearance, till within a few years of his death, vigorous and muscular. His face, for an old man, was one of the finest we have seen. A clear, smooth forehead; an aquiline nose; an eye, the brightest and most piercing that can be conceived; and a freshness of complexion, scarcely ever to be found at his years; and, impressive of the most perfect health, conspired to render him a venerable and interesting figure. Few have seen him without being struck with his appearance: and many, who had been greatly prejudiced against him, have been known to change their opinion the moment they were introduced into his presence. In his countenance and demeanor, there was a cheerfulness mingled with gravity; a sprightliness, which was the natural result of an unusual flow of spirits, and yet was accompanied with every mark of the most serene tranquillity. His aspect, particularly in profile, had a strong character of acuteness and penetration.

"In dress, he was a pattern of neatness and simplicity; a narrow plaited stock; a coat, with a small upright collar; no buckles at his knees; no silk or velvet in any part of his apparel; and a head as white as snow, gave an idea of something primitive and apostolic; while an air of neatness and cleanliness was diffused over his whole person."

CHAPTER XV.

A few miscellaneous topics remain to be noticed. One of the chief reasons why full and willing justice has not been always done to the labors of Mr. Wesley, has doubtless arisen from the facts, that whatever his views might be, he raised up a people, who in his life-time formed a religious body independent of the church, whilst yet not nominally separated from it; and that since his death, although that separation does not affect all the members, yet the great mass of the societies, with all the preachers, are as completely separated from the establishment, as any body of professed Dissenters. That a strict churchman should consider this as a great counterbalance to the good effected by Methodism is very natural—and he has a right to his opinions, provided he holds them in charity. Still, however, this subject is so frequently dwelt upon under mistaken and imperfect views, that it demands a few additional remarks.

As far as Mr. Wesley's character is concerned, enough has been said to show the sincerity with which he disavowed all intention of separating from the church, and of making his people separatists. This, certainly, notwithstanding the freedom of his opinions on church government, cannot be charged upon him in the early period of his career; and although, in what we may call the second period, he saw so strong a tendency to separation that his fears were often excited, yet he may surely be allowed still to have proceeded straight forward, with perfect honesty of mind, in the same course, with more of hope on this subject, than of fear. Several eminent writers of the church party have thought, that even modern Methodism, though existing now in a form apparently less friendly to union, might still with advantage be attached to the church, and have seen but little difficulty in the project. Why then might not Mr. Wesley, even after his societies had acquired considerable maturity, still hope that those simple institutions for promoting piety, which he had commenced, might have been recognized by the church, and hoped that the spirit of religion, revived already to so great an extent, might still further so influence the members of the church and its clergy, as to dispose them to view his societies with more cordiality? He took care, therefore, and all his principles and feelings favored the caution, that no obstacles should be placed in the way of the closest connection of his societies with the establishment. Their services were very seldom held in the hours of her public service; the Methodists formed in many parishes the great body of her communicants; thousands of them died in her communion; and the preachers were not ordinarily permitted to administer either of the sacraments to the people among whom they labored. There can be no charge, therefore, against his sincerity at this period, any more than in the first. We may think his hopes to have been without any foundation; and so they proved; and the idea of uniting the modern Methodists to the church is a very visionary one, but has doubtless been maintained by several churchmen with great sincerity. Separation from the church, at a later period of Mr. Wesley's life, was certainly anticipated. That must be allowed; but an enlightened churchman ought to think that Mr. Wesley's conduct was still worthy of praise, not of censure; for when a partial separation was in reality foreseen as probable, it had no sanction from him, and he appeared determined so to employ his influence to his last breath, that if separation did ensue, it should assume the mildest form possible, and be deprived of all feelings of hostility. His example, the spirit of his writings, and his advices, all tended to this; and the fact is, that, though Methodism now stands in a different relation to the establishment than in the days of Mr. Wesley, dissent has never been formally professed by the body, and for obvious reasons. The first is, that the separation of the greater part of the society from the church, did not in any great degree result from the principles assumed by the professed dissenters, and which are usually made prominent in their discussions on the subject of establishments; the second, that a considerable number of the Methodists actually continue in the communion of the church of England to this day; and the third, that to leave that communion is not, in any sense, a condition of membership with us. All the services of the church and her sacraments may be observed by any person in the Wesleyan societies who chooses it, and they are actually observed by many.

It was owing to these circumstances that Methodism did not rush down, but gently glided, into a state of partial division from the church; and this, by neither arousing party passions, nor exciting discussions on abstract points of church polity, has left the general feeling of affection to all that is excellent in the establishment unimpaired. No intemperate attacks upon it have been ever sanctioned; the attendance of the Methodists upon its services was never discouraged; and it is surely of some account that a vast mass of people throughout the country have been held in a state of friendly feeling towards a clergy who have nevertheless generally treated them with disdain and contumely, and many of whom have zealously employed themselves in nursing feelings of bigoted dislike to them among their friends and neighbors. Yet after all, the prevalent sentiment of the Methodists, as a body, towards the establishment has been that of friendship. It was so, when the church was in a lower religious state than it is at present; and its more recent religious improvement has not diminished the feeling.

I may venture to say, that there is a warmer regard towards the church among the body of the Methodists now, than there was in the days of Mr. Wesley; although there were then more Methodists than at present who professed to be of her communion. We have no respect at all to her exclusive claims of divine right, or her three orders of ministers; and yet have no objection to her episcopacy, when scripturally understood, or her services. We smile at the claims she sometimes assumes to be the exclusive instructress of the people, in a country where the statute law has given them the right to be taught by whom they please, and as explicitly protects dissent as conformity; but we rejoice that she has great influence with the mass of the population, whenever that influence is used for the promotion of true religion and good morals. We wish her prosperity and perpetuity, as we wish all other Christian churches; and the more so, as we recognize in her "the mother of us all," and can never contemplate without the deepest admiration her noble army of confessors and martyrs, and the illustrious train of her divines, whose writings have been, and continue to be, the light of christendom. If churchmen think this feeling of any importance, let them reciprocate it; and though the formal union of which some of them have spoken is visionary, a still stronger bond of friendship might be established; and each might thus become more formidable against the errors and evils of the times;—for a people who have nearly half as many places of worship in the kingdom as there are parish churches, cannot be without influence.

Nor have the true causes which led to the separation of the Methodists from the church, been in general rightly stated. Some of the violent adherents of "the old plan," as it was called, among ourselves, have ignorantly or in a party spirit attributed this to the ambition and intrigues of the preachers; but the true causes were—that the clergy, *generally*, did not preach the doctrines of their own church and of the reformation; and that *many* of them did not adorn their profession by their lives. It may be added, that in no small number of cases, the clergy were the persecutors and calumniators of the Wesleyan societies; that the sermons in the churches were often intemperate attacks upon their characters and opinions; and that the Methodists were frequently regarded as intruders at the table of the Lord, rather than as welcome communicants. These were the reasons why long before Mr. Wesley's death, a great number of his societies were anxious to have the sacraments from the hands of their own preachers, under whose ministry they were instructed and edified, in whose characters they had confidence, and with respect to whom they knew, that if any one disgraced his profession, he would not be suffered long to exercise it.

Such were the true causes which led to the partial separation of the Methodist societies from the communion of the church, after the death of Mr. Wesley; and this is an answer to the objection, repeated a thousand times, that we have departed from Mr. Wesley's principles. The fact is, that though full relief to the consciences of the societies in general was refused by Mr. Wesley's authority, yet he himself was obliged to allow a relaxation from his own rule in London, and some other principal towns, by giving the Lord's supper himself, or obtaining pious clergymen to administer it in his chapels. After his death it was out of the power of the conference, had they not felt the force of the reasons urged upon them, to prevent the administration of the sacraments to the people by their own preachers. Yet in the controversy which this subject excited, speculative principles had little part. The question stood on plain practical grounds:—Shall the societies be obliged, from their conscientious scruples, to neglect an ordinance of God? Or shall we drive them to the Dissenters, whose peculiar doctrines they do not believe? Or shall we under certain regulations accede to their wishes? So far from Mr. Wesley's principles and views having lost their influence with the conference, the sacraments were forced upon none, and recommended to none. The old principles were held as fast as higher duties would allow. Many indeed of the people, and some of the preachers, opposed even these concessions; but the plan which was adopted to meet cases of conscientious scruple, and yet to avoid encouraging a departure from the primitive system, leaving every individual to act in this respect as he was persuaded in his own mind, and receive the Lord's supper at church or at chapel, was at length by both parties in England cordially acquiesced in, as warranted equally by principle and by prudence. Assuredly the church would have gained nothing by a different measure, for the dissidents would have been compelled to join other communions. Had the church been provided early with an evangelical and a holy ministry, that separation would not have taken place; for the controversy between the church and the Dissenters was little known, and still less regarded by the majority of the Methodist societies at that time; and the case is not greatly altered at the present day. The clergy had lost their hold upon the people generally, through neglect; and that revival of the spirit of truth and holiness, which we are now so happy to witness among them, came too late to prevent the results just stated.

And what should we do now, if we were disposed to revert to the state of things in Mr. Wesley's time? It is true we should more rarely meet with immoral clergymen; and so that part of the case would be relieved as a matter of conscience. But would the Methodist societies meet with friendly clergymen; with men who would bear with so many communicants, in addition to those who now attend their churches? And if they were brought to attend the services of their parish churches, would they be disposed long to hear those of the clergy who never preach the doctrines of the articles of their own church?—or those who follow some great names of the present day, and *neologise* as far as decency permits?—or those of the evangelical party, whose discourses are strongly impregnated with Calvinism?—or those who place their speculations on the prophecies among the means of grace and salvation? Our people would neither hear such clergymen themselves, nor could they conscientiously train up their families to listen to what they believe great error; and so if we were to go back, as we have been exhorted, to Mr. Wesley's first plan, the majority of our people would, as then, neither attend church nor sacrament, and the same process would have to be repeated again, with probably less peaceful results.

"But 'great evil' has resulted to the church from Methodism." This has been often said, certainly never substantiated; and this defence of the hostile feeling of many churchmen towards Mr. Wesley and his societies stands upon no solid ground. On the contrary, it seems not at all difficult to make it plainly appear that great good has resulted to the church, as well as to the nation. When this question is under consideration by churchmen, they look at the mere fact that a great body of people have been raised up, as they say, out of the church, within a century past, excelling in number almost, if not entirely, the whole of the old bodies of Dissenters; and they assume that if the Wesleys and Mr. Whitefield had never appeared, the church would have been in as improved a state as now, with none but the old dissenters to contend with. There is great fallacy in both these views, which merits to be pointed out.

When the Messrs. Wesley, Mr. Whitefield, and their early coadjutors entered upon their itinerant career, it is a matter of fact and history, that no general plans for the illumination of the nation were either in operation, or in the contemplation of any one. Nothing had this bearing. There were no persons associated in such institutions of any kind, making this a common object. The pious labors of a few zealous clergymen, (and few they were,) and of the ministers of other denominations, were confined to their own parishes and congregations. There were no means of general application in existence, to remove the ignorance and correct the vices which were almost universal. The measures taken by the founders of Methodism to correct existing evils were on a large scale. They acted in concert; they conceived noble designs. They visited the large towns; they labored in the populous mining, manufacturing, and commercial districts; they preached in places of public resort; they formed religious societies, and inspired them with zeal, for the instruction and salvation of their neighbors; they employed men of zeal, character, and competent acquaintance with practical and experimental religion, to assist them in this work as it widened before them; and they gave it their vigilant superintendence. The benefits they were the means of producing were not confined to individuals; they influenced whole neighborhoods. Religious knowledge was spread, and religious influence exerted. The manners of the rude were civilized; barbarous sports and pastimes fell greatly into disuse; and a higher standard of morals was erected, of itself of no small importance to the reformation of manners.

It is a matter of history, that, beside those means which were afforded by their personal labors, and by the auxiliaries they brought forward to their assistance, in order to revive and extend the spirit of religion in the nation, for a great number of years no other means of extensive application were employed to promote this end. The effects which were thus produced began, however, after a considerable time had elapsed, to operate collaterally as well as directly. Many of the clergy were aroused, and the doctrines of the articles and the homilies began to be heard more distinctly and more frequently in their pulpits. Holy and zealous men in different denominations began to labor for the public instruction and reformation. The institution of Sunday-schools, though devised by a churchman, was, at first, but slowly encouraged. The Methodists and Dissenters were carrying those schools to a great extent when the members of the church followed: some from a fear, laudable enough, lest the body of the poor should be alienated from the establishment; others, as perceiving in the institution the means of conveying instruction and religious influence to those who most needed them. The circulation of the Scriptures by Bible societies followed; but still that was an effect of the new order of principles and feelings which had been introduced into the nation. These principles of zeal for the moral improvement of society farther led, at a later period, to general measures for the education of the poor by the two great national education societies, which promise so much benefit to the country. All these efforts for enlightening and moralizing the people may be traced to several intermediate causes: but it is only justice to the memory of such men as the Wesleys and Whitefield, men so often flippantly branded as enthusiasts, to state, that they all primarily sprang from that spirit which, under God, they were the means of exciting in a slumbering church, and in a dark and neglected land. This is a point not to be denied; for long before any of those efforts for public instruction and reformation which could be considered national were called forth, those aspersed men were pursuing their gigantic labors among the profligate population of London, and of the principal towns of the kingdom; among the miners of Cornwall, the colliers of Kingswood and Newcastle, and the manufacturers of Yorkshire and Lancashire; whilst the preachers they employed were every year spreading themselves into dark semi-barbarous villages in the most secluded parts of the kingdom; enduring bitter privations, and encountering, almost daily, the insults of rude mobs, that they might convey to them the knowledge of religion.

Now, in order to judge of these efforts, and to ascertain what "evil" has resulted to the church of England from Mr. Wesley's measures, it is but fair to consider what the state of the country and of the church must in all human probability have been, had he and his associates never appeared, or confined themselves to the obscurity of Epworth and similar parishes. It is not denied that other means and agents might have been raised up by God to effect the purposes of his mercy; but it is denied that any such were raised up—for this is matter of fact. No agency has appeared in the church, or out of it, tending to the general instruction and evangelizing of the nation, and operating on a large scale, which is not much subsequent in its origin to the exertions of the Messrs. Wesley and Whitefield; and which may not be traced to the spirit which they excited, and often into the very bosoms of those who derived their first light and influence, either directly or indirectly, from them. What *was*, and not what *might have been*, can only be made the ground of argument.

But for their labors, therefore, and the labors of those persons in the church, among the Dissenters, and their own people, whom they imbued with the same spirit, that state of things in the church of England, and in the country at large, which has been already described, must have continued, at least for many years, for any thing which appears to the contrary;—for no substitute for their exertions was supplied by any party. They took the place of none who were exerting themselves: they opposed no obstacle to the operation of any plan of usefulness, had it been in preparation. If they therefore had not appeared, and kindled that flame of religious feeling which ultimately spread into many denominations of Christians, and thus gave birth to that variety of effort which now diffuses itself through the land, it is a very erroneous conclusion to suppose, that a later period would have found the nation and the church at all improved. The probability, almost amounting to certainty, is, that both would have been found still more deteriorated, and in a state which would have presented obstacles much more formidable to their recovery. For all who have given attention to such subjects must know, that a number of those demoralizing causes were then coming into operation, which, with all the counteractions since supplied by the church, and the different religious sects, by schools, and by Bibles, have produced very injurious effects upon the morals and principles of the nation; that the tide of an unprecedented commercial prosperity began then to flow into the country, and continued, for a long succession of years, to render the means of sensual indulgence more ample, and to corrupt more deeply all ranks of society; that in consequence of the independence thus given to the lower orders in many of the most populous districts, the moral control and influence of the higher became gradually weaker;—that the agitation of political subjects, during the American quarrel and the French revolution, with the part which even the operative classes were able to take in such discussions by means of an extended education, produced, as will always be the case among the half-informed, a strong tendency to republicanism, a

restless desire of political change on every pinching of the times, and its constant concomitant, an aversion to the national establishment, partly as the result of ill-digested theories, and partly because this feeling was encouraged by the negligent habits of many of the clergy, and the absence of that influence which they might have acquired in their parishes by careful pastoral attentions. To all this is to be added the diffusion of infidel principles, both of foreign and home growth, which, from the studies of the learned, descended into the shop of the mechanic, and, embodied in cheap and popular works, found their way into every part of the empire. To counteract agencies and principles so active and so pernicious, it is granted that no means have yet been applied of complete adequacy. This is the reason why their effects are so rife in the present day, and that we are now in the midst of a state of things which no considerate man can contemplate without some anxiety. These circumstances, so devastating to morals and good principles, could only have been fully neutralized by the ardent exertions of every clergyman in his parish, of every dissenting minister in his congregation, of every Methodist preacher in his circuit, of every private Christian in his own circle, or in the place which useful and pious institutions of various kinds would have assigned him; and even then the special blessing of God would have been nesessary to give effect to the whole. But had no correctives been applied what had been the present state of the nation and of the church? The labors of the founders of Methodism were, from the beginning, directly counteractive of the evils just mentioned; and those have little reason to stigmatize them who deplore such evils most, and yet have done least for their correction and restraint. Wherever these men went, they planted the principles of religion in the minds of the multitudes who heard them; they acted on the *offensive* against immorality, infidelity, and error; the societies they raised were employed in doing good to all; the persons they associated with them in the work of national reformation were always engaged in diffusing piety; and though great multitudes were beyond their reach, they spread themselves into every part of the land, turning the attention of men to religious concerns, calming their passions, guarding them against the strifes of the world, enjoining the scriptural principles of "obedience to magistrates," and a sober, temperate, peaceable, and benevolent conduct. The direct effect of their exertions was great; and it increased in energy and extent as the demoralizing causes before-mentioned acquired also greater activity; and when their indirect influence began to appear more fully in the national church, and in other religious bodies, remedies more commensurate with the evils existing in the country began to be applied. I shall not affect to say what would have been the state of the church of England under the uncontrolled operation of all the causes of moral deterioration, and civil strife, to which I have adverted; or what hold that church would have had upon the people at this day, if the spirit of religion had not been revived in the country, and if, when ancient prejudices were destroyed or weakened by the general spread of information among men, no new bond between it and the nation at large had been created. But if, as I am happy to believe, the national church has much more influence and much more respect now than formerly; and if its influence and the respect due to it are increasing with the increase of its evangelical clergy, all this is owing to the existence of a stronger spirit of piety: and in producing that, the first great instruments were the men whose labors have been mentioned in the preceding pages. Not only has the spirit which they excited improved the religious state of the church, but it has disposed the great body of religious people, not of the church, to admire and respect those numerous members of the establishment, both clergymen and laics, whose eminent piety, talents, and usefulness, have done more to abate the prejudices arising from different views of church-government, than a thousand treatises could have effected, however eloquently written, or ably argued.

It may also be asked, Who are the persons whom the Methodists have alienated from the church? In this too, the church writers have labored under great mistakes. They have "alienated" those, for the most part, who never were, in any substantial sense, and never would have been of the church. Very few of her pious members have at any time been separated from her communion by a connection with us; and many who became serious through the Methodist ministry, continued attendants on her services, and observers of her sacraments. This was the case during the life of Mr. Wesley, and in many instances is so still; and when an actual separation of a few persons has occurred, it has been much more than compensated by a return of others from us to the church, especially of opulent persons, or their children, in consequence of that superior influence which an established church must always exert upon people of that class. For the rest, they have been brought chiefly from the ranks of the ignorant and the careless; persons who had little knowledge, and no experience of the power of religion; negligent of religious worship of every kind, and many of whom, but for the agency of Methodism, would have swelled the ranks of those who are equally disaffected to church and state. If such persons are not now churchmen, they are influenced by no feelings hostile to the institutions of their country.

Such considerations may tend to convey more sober views on a subject often taken up in heat:—that they will quite disarm the feeling against which they are levelled is more than can be hoped for, considering the effects of party spirit, and the many forms of virtue which it simulates. However, it is nothing new for the Methodists to endure reproach, and to be subject to misrepresentations. Perhaps something of an exclusive spirit may have grown up amongst us in consequence; but, if so, it has this palliation, that we are quite as expansive as the circumstances in which we have ever been placed could lead any reasonable man to anticipate. It might almost be said of us, "Lo, the people shall dwell alone." The high churchman has persecuted us because we are separatists; the high Dissenter has often looked upon us with hostility, because we would not see that an establishment necessarily, and *in se*, involved a sin against the supremacy of Christ; the rigid Calvinist has disliked us, because we hold the redemption of all men; the Pelagianized Arminian, because we contend for salvation by grace; the Antinomian, because we insist upon the perpetual obligation of the moral law; the moralist, because we exalt faith; the disaffected, because we hold that loyalty and religion are inseparable; the political tory, because he cannot think that separatists from the church can be loyal to the throne; the philosopher, because he deems us fanatics; whilst semi-infidel liberals generally exclude us from all share in their liberality, except it be in their liberality of abuse. In the mean time, we have occasionally been favored with a smile, though somewhat of a *condescending* one, from the lofty churchman; and often with a fraternal embrace from pious and liberal Dissenters: and if we act upon the principles left us by our great founder, we shall make a meek and lowly temper an essential part of our religion: and, after his example

move onward in the path of doing good, through "honor and dishonor, through evil report and good report," remembering that one fundamental principle of Wesleyan Methodism is ANTI-SECTARIANISM AND A CATHOLIC SPIRIT.

To return, however, to Mr. Wesley: Among the censures which have been frequently directed against him, are his alleged love of power, and his credulity. The first is a vice; the second but a weakness; and they stand therefore upon different grounds.

As to the love of power, it may be granted that, like many minds who seem born to direct, he desired to acquire influence; and, when he attained it, he employed his one talent so as to make it gain more talents. If he had loved power for its own sake, or to minister to selfish purposes, or to injure others, this would have been a great blemish; but he sacrificed no principle of his own, and no interest or right of others, for its gratification. He gained power as all great and good men gain it, by the very greatness and goodness with which they are endowed, and of which others are always more sensible than themselves. It devolved upon him without any contrivance; and when he knew he possessed it, no instance is on record of his having abused it. This is surely virtue, not vice, and virtue of the highest order. The only proof attempted to be given that he loved power, is, that he never devolved his authority over the societies upon others: but this is capable of an easy explanation. He could not have shared his power among *many*, without drawing up a formal constitution of church-government for his societies, which would have amounted to a formal separation from the church; and it would have been an insane action had he devolved it upon *one*, and placed himself, and the work he had effected, under the management of any individual to whom his societies could not stand in the same filial relation as to himself. He, however, exercised his influence by aid of the counsel of others; and allowed the free discussion of all prudential matters in the conference. Had he been armed with legal power to inflict pains and penalties, he ought to have distrusted himself, as every wise and good man would do, and to have voluntarily put himself beyond the reach of temptation to abuse what mere man, without check, can seldom use aright. This I grant; but the control to which he was subject was, that the union of his societies with him was perfectly voluntary, so that over them he could have no influence at all but what was founded upon character, and public spirit, and fatherly affection. The power which he exercised has descended to the conference of preachers; and, as in this case, his has been often very absurdly complained of, as though it were parallel to the power of civil government, or to that of an established church, supported by statutes and the civil arm. But this power, like his, is moral influence only, founded upon the pastoral character, and can exist only upon the basis of the confidence inspired by the fact of its generally just and salutary exercise among a people who neither are nor can be under any compulsion.

On the charge of credulity, it may be observed, that Mr. Wesley lived in an age in which he thought men in danger of believing too little, rather than too much, and his belief in apparitions is at least no proof of a credulousness peculiar to himself. With respect to the "strange accounts" which he inserted in his magazine, and strange indeed some of them were, it has been falsely assumed that he himself believed them entire. This is not true. He frequently remarks, that he gives no opinion, or that "he knows not what to make of the account," or that "he leaves every one to form his own judgment concerning it." He met with those relations in reading, or received them from persons deemed by him credible, and he put them on record as facts reported to have happened. Now, as to an unbeliever, one sees not what sound objection he can make to that being recorded which has commanded the faith of others; for as a part of the history of human opinions, such accounts are curious, and have their use. It neither followed, that the editor of the work believed every account, nor that his readers should consider it true because it was printed. It was for them to judge of the evidence on which the relation stood. Many of these accounts, however, Mr. Wesley did credit, because he thought that they stood on credible testimony; and he published them for that very purpose, for which he believed they were permitted to occur—to confirm the faith of men in an invisible state, and in the immortality of the soul. These were his motives for inserting such articles in his magazine; and to the censure which has been passed upon him on this account, may be opposed the words of the learned Dr. Henry More, in his letter to Glanville, the author of *Sadducismus Triumphatus*: "Wherefore let the small philosophic Sir Toplings of this present age deride as much as they will, those that lay out their pains in committing to writing certain well-attested stories of apparitions, do real service to true religion and sound philosophy; and they most effectually contribute to the confounding of infidelity and Atheism, even in the judgment of the Atheists themselves, who are as much afraid of the truth of these stories as an ape is of a whip, and therefore force themselves with might and main to disbelieve them, by reason of the dreadful consequence of them, as to themselves." It is sensibly observed by Jortin, in his remarks on the diabolical possessions in the age of our Lord, that "one reason for which Divine Providence should suffer evil spirits to exert their malignant powers at that time, might be to save a check to Sadducism among the Jews, and Atheism among the Gentiles, and to remove in some measure these two great impediments to the reception of the gospel." For moral uses, supernatural visitations may have been allowed in subsequent ages; and he who believes in them, only spreads their moral the farther by giving them publicity. Before such a person can be fairly censured, the ground of his faith ought to be disproved, for he only acts consistently with that faith. This task would, however, prove somewhat difficult.

Mr. Wesley was a voluminous writer; and as he was one of the great instruments in reviving the spirit of religion in these lands, so he led the way in those praiseworthy attempts which have been made to diffuse useful information of every kind, and to smooth the path of knowledge to the middle and lower ranks of society. Besides books on religious subjects, he published many small and cheap treatises on various branches of science; plain and excellent grammars of the dead languages; expurgated editions of the classic authors; histories, civil and ecclesiastical; and numerous abridgments of important works.*

* Mr. Wesley's principal writings are, his translations of the New Testament, with Explanatory Notes, quarto; his Journals, 6 vols. duodecimo; his Sermons, 9 volumes duodecimo; his Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion; his Defence of the Doctrine of Original Sin, in Answer to Dr. Taylor; his answers to Mr. Church, and Bishops Lavington and Warburton; and his Predestination calmly considered, besides many smaller tracts on various important subjects. His works were published by himself in thirty-two volumes, duodecimo, in the year 1771. An edition of them in fourteen large octavo volumes has just been completed; with his work on the New Testament in two volumes of the same size. In addition to his original compositions, Mr

It is his especial praise, that he took an early part in denouncing the iniquities of the African slave trade, and in arousing the conscience of the nation on the subject. In Bristol, at that time a dark den of slave-traders, he courageously preached openly against it, defying the rage of the slave-merchants and the mob; and his spirited and ably reasoned tract on slavery continues to be admired and quoted to the present time. It may be added, that one of the last letters he ever wrote was to Mr. Wilberforce, exhorting him to perseverance in a work, of which he was one of the leading instruments—the effecting the abolition of the traffic in the nerves and blood of man.

At the time of Mr. Wesley's death, the number of members in connection with him in Europe, America, and the West India Islands, was 80,000. At the last conference, 1830, the numbers returned were, in Great Britain, 249,278; in Ireland, 22,897; in foreign missions 41,186; total 313,360, exclusive of near half a million of persons in the societies in the states of America. As to the field of labor at home, the number of circuits in the United Kingdom, was, at the time of his death, 115. At present they are 399. The number of mission stations was 8 in the West Indies, and 8 in British America: at present there are 150. The number of preachers left by him was 312. It is now 993, in the United Kingdom; and 193 in the foreign missions. In the United States of America the number of preachers is about 2,000.

Such have been the results of the labors of this great and good man. Whether they are still to diffuse a hallowing influence through the country, and convey the blessings of Christianity to heathen lands with the same rapidity and with the same vigor, will, under the Divine blessing, depend upon those who have received from him *the trust* of a system of religious agency, to be employed with the same singleness of heart, the same benevolent zeal for the spiritual benefit of mankind, and the same dependance upon the Holy Spirit. I know not that it bears upon it any marks of decay, although it may require to be accommodated in a few particulars to the new circumstances with which it is surrounded. The doctrinal views which Mr. Wesley held were probably never better understood or more accurately stated in the discourses of the preachers; and the moral discipline of the body, in all its essential parts, was never more cordially approved by the people generally, or enforced with greater faithfulness by their pastors. Very numerous are the converts who are every year won from the world, brought under religious influence, and placed in the enjoyment of means and ordinances favorable to their growth in religious knowledge, and holy habits; and many are constantly passing into eternity, of whose "good hope through grace," the testimony is in the highest degree satisfactory. If Methodism continue in vigor and purity to future ages, it will still be associated with the name of its founder, and encircle his memory with increasing lustre; and if it should fall into the formality and decays which have proved the lot of many other religious bodies, he will not lose his reward. Still a glorious harvest of saved souls is laid up in the heavenly garner, which will be his "rejoicing in the day of the Lord;" whilst the indirect influence of his labors upon the other religious bodies and institutions of the country will justly entitle him to be considered as one of the most honored instruments of reviving and extending the influence of religion, that, since the time of the apostles have been raised up by the providence of God.

Wesley published upwards of a hundred and twenty different works, mostly abridged from other authors; among which are Grammars in five different languages; the Christian Library, in fifty duodecimo volumes; thirteen volumes of the Arminian Magazine; a History of England, and a general Ecclesiastical History, in four volumes each; a Compendium of Natural Philosophy, in five volumes; and an Exposition of the Old Testament, in three quarto volumes.

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THE LIFE

OF

WILLIAM COWPER, ESQ.

COMPILED

FROM HIS CORRESPONDENCE,

AND OTHER

AUTHENTIC SOURCES OF INFORMATION:

CONTAINING

REMARKS ON HIS WRITINGS, AND ON THE PECULIARITIES OF HIS INTERESTING CHARACTER,

NEVER BEFORE PUBLISHED.

BY THOMAS TAYLOR.

"Untainted with the blandishments of vice,
Which mark the manners of the present age,
He sought and found the pearl of precious price
Which stands recorded in the sacred page.
Yet, spite of all that wisdom could impart,
And all the fervor of religious flame,
Grief poured a tide of anguish through his heart,
And shook the fabric of his mental frame."

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1835.

TO

R. D. ALEXANDER, ESQ. F. L. S.

THE STEADY, DETERMINED, AND PERSEVERING FRIEND OF HUMANITY,

THIS LIFE

OF THE AMIABLE, PIOUS, AND HIGHLY-GIFTED, BUT DEEPLY-AFFLICTED POET,

COWPER,

WHICH OWES ITS EXISTENCE ENTIRELY TO HIS SUGGESTION,

IS MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,

AS A SLIGHT, BUT SINCERE AND GRATEFUL TRIBUTE OF ESTEEM,

FOR THE NUMEROUS UNMERITED FAVORS RECEIVED FROM HIM,

BY HIS OBEDIENT SERVANT, THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

Many lives of Cowper have already been published. Why, then, it may be asked, add to their number? Simply because, in the opinion of competent judges, no memoir of him has yet appeared that gives a full, fair, and unbiassed view of his character.

It is remarked by Dr. Johnson, the poet's kinsman, in his preface to the two volumes of Cowper's Private Correspondence, "that Mr. Hayley omitted the insertion of several interesting letters in his excellent Life of the poet, out of kindness to his readers." In doing this, however, amiable and considerate as his caution must appear, the gloominess which he has taken from the mind of Cowper, has the effect of involving his character in obscurity. People read "The Letters" with "The Task" in their recollection, (and vice versa,) and are perplexed. They look for the Cowper of each in the other, and find him not. Hence the character of Cowper is undetermined; mystery hangs over it; and the opinions formed of him are as various as the minds of the inquirers.

In alluding to these suppressed letters, the late highly-esteemed Rev. Leigh Richmond, once emphatically remarked—"Cowper's character will never be clearly and satisfactorily understood without them, and they should be permitted to exist for the demonstration of the case. I know the importance of it from various conversations I have had both in Scotland and in England, on this most interesting subject. Persons of truly religious principles, as well as those of little or no religion at all, have greatly erred in their estimate of this great and good man."

Dr. Johnson's two volumes of Private Correspondence satisfactorily supplied this deficiency to all those who have the means of consulting them, and the four volumes by Mr. Hayley. The author of this memoir has attempted not only to bring the substance of these six volumes into one, but to communicate information respecting the poet which cannot be found in either of those works. He is fully aware of the peculiarities of Cowper's case, and has endeavored to exhibit them as prominently as was compatible with his design, without giving to the memoir too much of that melancholy tinge by which the life of its subject was so painfully distinguished.

In every instance where he could well accomplish it, he has made Cowper his own biographer, convinced that it is utterly impossible to narrate any circumstance in a manner more striking, or in a style more chaste and elegant, than Cowper has employed in his inimitable letters.

To impart ease and perspicuity to the memoir, and to compress it into as small a compass as was consistent with a full development and faithful record of the most interesting particulars of Cowper's life, the author has, in a few cases, inserted in one paragraph, remarks extracted from different letters, addressed more frequently, though not invariably, to the same individual. He has, however, taken care to avoid doing this where it could lead to any obscurity.

He has made a free use of all the published records of Cowper within his reach, besides availing himself of the valuable advice of the Rev. Dr. Johnson, Cowper's kinsman, to whom he hereby respectfully tenders his grateful acknowledgments for his condescension and kindness, in undertaking to examine the manuscript, and for the useful and judicious hints respecting it he was pleased to suggest.

Without concealing a single fact of real importance, the author has carefully avoided giving that degree of prominence to any painful circumstance in the poet's life, which would be likely to excite regret in the minds of any of his surviving relatives, and which for reasons the most amiable and perfectly excusable, they might have wished had been suppressed; and he hopes it will be found that he has admitted nothing that can justly offend the most fastidious.

It is particularly the wish of the author to state, that he makes no pretensions to originality in this memoir. He wishes it be regarded only as a compilation; and all the merit he claims for it, if indeed it has any, is for the arrangement of those materials which were already furnished for his use.

He has attempted to make the work interesting to all classes, especially to the lovers of literature and genuine piety, and to place within the reach of general readers, many of whom have neither the means nor the leisure to consult larger works, all that is really interesting respecting that singularly afflicted individual, whose productions, both poetic and prose, can never be read but with delight.

October 27, 1832.

THE LIFE OF WILLIAM COWPER.

CHAPTER I.

His parentage. Loss of his mother. Poetic description of her character. First school. Cruelty he experienced there. First serious impressions. Is placed under the care of an eminent oculist. Entrance upon Westminster School. Character while there. Removal thence. Entrance upon an attorney's office. Want of employment there. Unfitness for his profession. Early melancholy impressions.

William Cowper was born at Great Berkhamstead, in Hertfordshire, November 15, 1731. His father, Dr. John Cowper, chaplain to King George the Second, was the second son of Spencer Cowper, who was Chief Justice of Cheshire, and afterwards a Judge in the Court of Common Pleas, and whose brother William, first Earl Cowper, was, at the same time, Lord High Chancellor of England. His mother was Anne, daughter of Roger Donne, Esq. of Ludham Hall, Norfolk, who had a common ancestry with the celebrated Dr. Donne, Dean of St. Paul's.

In reference to this lady, it has been justly observed by one of the poet's best biographers, "That the highest blood in the realm flowed in the veins of the modest and unassuming Cowper; his mother having descended through the families of Hippesley of Throughley, in Sussex, and Pellet, of Bolney, in the same county, from the several noble houses of West, Knollys, Carey, Bullen, Howard, and Mowbray, and so, by four different lines, from Henry the Third, King of England." Though, as the same writer properly remarks, "distinctions of this nature can shed no additional lustre on the memory of Cowper, yet genius, however exalted, disdains not, while it boasts not, the splendor of ancestry; and royalty itself may be pleased, and perhaps benefited, by discovering its kindred in such piety, such purity, and such talents as his."

Very little is known of the habits and disposition of Cowper's mother. From the following epitaph, however, inscribed on a monument, erected by her husband in the chancel of St. Peter's church, Great Berkhamstead, and composed by her niece, who afterwards became Lady Walsingham, she appears to have been a lady of the most amiable temper and agreeable manners:—

Here lies, in early years bereft of life,
The best of mothers, and the kindest wife,
Who neither knew nor practised any art,
Secure in all she wished—her husband's heart.
Her love to him still prevalent in death,
Pray'd Heaven to bless him, with her latest breath.
Still was she studious never to offend,
And glad of an occasion to commend:
With ease would pardon injuries received,
Nor e'er was cheerful when another grieved.
Despising state, with her own lot content,
Enjoyed the comforts of a life well spent;
Resigned when heaven demanded back her breath,
Her mind heroic 'midst the pangs of death.
Whoe'er thou art that dost this tomb draw near,
O, stay awhile, and shed a friendly tear;
These lines, though weak, are as herself sincere.

After giving birth to several children, this lady died in child-bed, in her thirty-seventh year; leaving only two sons, John the younger, and William the elder, who is the subject of this memoir. Cowper was only six years old when he lost his mother; and how deeply he was affected by her early death, may be inferred from the following exquisitely tender lines, composed more than fifty years afterwards, on the receipt of her portrait from a relation in Norfolk:—

"My mother! when I learned that thou wast dead,
Say, wast thou conscious of the tears I shed?
Hovered thy spirit o'er thy sorrowing son,
Wretch even then, life's journey just begun?
Perhaps thou gav'st me, though unseen, a kiss:
Perhaps a tear, if souls can weep in bliss!
I heard the bell tolled on thy burial day,
I saw the hearse that bore thee far away,
And, turning from my nursery-window, drew
A long, long sigh, and wept a last adieu!
But was it such? It was—Where thou art gone
Adieus and farewells are a sound unknown.
May I but meet thee on that peaceful shore,
The parting sound shall pass my lips no more!
Thy maidens grieved themselves at my concern,
Oft gave me promise of a quick return.
What ardently I wished, I long believed,
And disappointed still, was still deceived.
By disappointment every day beguiled,
Dupe of to-morrow, even from a child.
Thus many a sad to-morrow came and went,
Till, all my stock of infant sorrow spent,
I learned at last submission to my lot,
But though I less deplored thee, ne'er forgot.
Could Time, his flight reversed, restore the hours
When playing with thy vesture's tissued flowers,
The violet, the pink, and jessamine,
I pricked them into paper with a pin,
(And thou wast happier than myself the while,
Would softly speak, and stroke my head, and smile,)
Could these few pleasant hours again appear,
Might one wish bring them, would I wish them here,
I would not trust my heart, the dear delight
Seems so to be desired, perhaps I might;
But no—what here we call our life is such,
So little to be loved, and thou so much,
That I should ill requite thee to constrain
Thy unbound spirit into bonds again.
Thou, as a gallant bark from Albion's coast
(The storm all weathered and the ocean crossed,
Shoots into port at some well-havened isle,
Where spices breathe, and brighter seasons smile,
There sits quiescent on the floods, that show
Her beauteous form reflected clear below,
While airs impregnated with incense play
Around her, fanning light her streamers gay:
So thou, with sails how swift! hast reached the shore
Where tempests never beat, nor billows roar.
And thy loved consort on the dangerous tide
Of life, long since, has anchored at thy side.
But me, scarce hoping to attain that rest,
Always from port withheld, always distressed—
Me, howling winds drive devious, tempest tost;
Sails ript, seams opening wide, and compass lost,
And day by day some current's thwarting force
Sets me more distant from a prosperous course.
But, oh! the thought that thou art safe, and he!
That thought is joy, arrive what may to me:
My boast is not that I deduce my birth
From loins enthroned, and rulers of the earth,
But higher far my proud pretensions rise—
The son of parents passed into the skies!"

Deprived thus early of his excellent and most affectionate parent, he was sent, at this tender age, to a large school at Market-street, Hertfordshire, under the care of Dr. Pitman. Here he had hardships of different kinds to conflict with, which he felt more sensibly, in consequence of the tender manner in which he had been treated at home. His chief sorrow, however, arose from the cruel treatment he met with from a boy in the same school, about fifteen years of age, who on all occasions persecuted him with the most unrelenting barbarity; and who never seemed pleased except when he was tormenting him. This savage treatment impressed such a dread upon Cowper's tender mind, of this boy, that he was afraid to lift up his eyes upon him higher than his knees; and he knew him better by his shoe-buckles than by any other part of his dress.

It was at this school, and on one of these painful

occasions, that the mind of Cowper, which was afterwards to become imbued with religious feelings of the highest order, received its first serious impressions—a circumstance which cannot fail to be interesting to every Christian reader, and the more so as detailed in his own words.

"One day, as I was sitting alone on a bench in the school, melancholy, and almost ready to weep at the recollection of what I had already suffered, and expecting at the same time my tormentor every moment, these words of the Psalmist came into my mind—'I will not be afraid of what man can do unto me.' I applied this to my own case, with a degree of trust and confidence in God, that would have been no disgrace to a much more experienced Christian. Instantly I perceived in myself a briskness and cheerfulness of spirit which I had never before experienced, and took several paces up and down the room with joyful alacrity. Happy had it been for me, if this early effort towards a dependence on the blessed God, had been frequently repeated. But, alas! it was the first and the last, between infancy and manhood."

From this school he was removed in his eighth year; and having at that time specks on both his eyes, which threatened to cover them, his father, alarmed for the consequences, placed him under the care of an eminent female oculist in London; in whose house he abode nearly two years. In this lady's family, religion was neither known nor practised; the slightest appearance of it, in any shape, was carefully concealed; even its outward forms were entirely unobserved. In a situation like this, it was not to be expected that young Cowper would long retain those serious impressions he had experienced; nor is it surprising, that before his removal thence he should have lost them entirely.

In his ninth year, he was sent to Westminster School, then under the care of Dr. Nicholls; who, though an ingenious and learned man, was nevertheless a negligent tutor; and one that encouraged his pupils in habits of indolence, not a little injurious to their future welfare. Here he remained seven years, and had frequent reason to complain of the same unkind treatment from some of his school-fellows, which he had before experienced. His timid, meek, and inoffensive spirit totally unfitted him for the hardships of a public school; and in all probability, the treatment he there received, produced in him an insuperable aversion to this method of instruction. We know but little of the actual progress he made while under the care of Dr. Nicholls; his subsequent eminence, however, as a scholar, proves that he must have been an attentive pupil, and must have made, at this period, a highly creditable proficiency in his studies.

While at this school, he was roused a second time to serious consideration. Crossing a churchyard late one evening, he saw a glimmering light in rather a remote part of it, which so excited his curiosity, as to induce him to approach it. Just as he arrived at the spot, a grave-digger, who was at work by the light of his lanthorn, threw up a skull-bone, which struck him on the leg. This little incident alarmed his conscience, and drew from him many painful reflections. The impression, however, was only temporary, and in a short time the event was entirely forgotten.

On another occasion, not long afterwards, he again at this early age, became the subject of religious impressions. It was the laudable practice of Dr. Nicholls to take great pains to prepare his pupils for confirmation. The Doctor acquitted himself of this duty like one who had a deep sense of its importance, and young Cowper was struck by his manner, and much affected by his exhortations. He now, for the first time in his life, attempted prayer in secret, but being little accustomed to that exercise of the heart, and having very childish notions of religion, he found it a difficult and painful task, and was even then alarmed at his own insensibility. These impressions, however, like those made upon his mind before, soon wore off, and he relapsed into a total forgetfulness of God, with the usual disadvantage of being more hardened, for having been softened to no purpose. This was evidently the case with him, for on being afterwards seized with the small pox, though he was in the most imminent danger, yet neither in the course of the disease, nor during his recovery from it, had he any sentiments of contrition, or any thoughts of God or eternity. He, however, derived one advantage from it—it removed, to a great degree, if it did not entirely cure, the disease in his eyes, proving, as he afterwards observed in a letter to Mr. Hayley, "a better oculist than the lady who had him under her care."

Such was the character of young Cowper, in his eighteenth year, when he left Westminster school. He had made a respectable proficiency in all his studies; but notwithstanding his previous serious impressions, he seems not to have had any more knowledge of the nature of religion, nor even to have discovered any more concern about it, than many other individuals have been known to feel, at an early age, who have never afterwards given it any attention. After spending six months at home, he was articled to a solicitor, with whom he was engaged to remain three years. In this gentleman's family, he neither saw nor heard any thing that could remind him of a single Christian duty; and here he might have lived utterly ignorant of the God that made him, had he not been providentially situated near his uncle's, in Southampton-row. At this favorite retreat, he was permitted to spend all his leisure time, and so seldom was he employed, that this was by far the greater part of it. With his uncle's family he passed nearly all his Sundays, and with some part of it he regularly attended public worship, but for which, probably, he would otherwise, owing to the force of evil example, have entirely neglected.

The choice of a profession for a youth, is ever of paramount importance; if injudiciously made, it not unfrequently lays the foundation for much future disappointment and sorrow. It would certainly have been difficult, and perhaps impossible, to have selected one more unsuitable to the mind of Cowper than that of the law. As Mr. Hayley justly observes, "the law is a kind of soldiership, and, like the profession of arms, it may be said to require for the constitution of its heroes,

"A frame of adamant, a soul of fire."

"The soul of Cowper had, indeed, its fire, but fire so refined and ethereal, that it could not be expected to shine in the gross atmosphere of worldly contention." Reserved, to an unusual and extraordinary degree, he was ill qualified to contend with the activity unavoidably connected with this profession. Though he possessed the strongest powers of mind, and a richly cultivated understanding, yet were they combined with such extreme sensibility, as totally disqualified him for the bustle of a court. An excessive tenderness, associated with a degree of shyness, not easily to be accounted for, utterly unfitted him for a profession that would often have placed him before the public, and brought him into contact with individuals not remarkable for such qualities. His extreme modesty, however, while it precluded the possibility of his being successful in this profession, endeared him inexpressibly to all who had the felicity to enjoy his society. Never was there a mind more admirably formed for communicating

to others, in private life, the richest sources of enjoyment; and yet, such were the peculiarities of his nature, that often, while he delighted and interested all around him, he was himself extremely unhappy. The following lines, composed by him about this time, are not less valuable, for the development they give of the state of his mind at that period, than they are remarkable for their exquisite tenderness and poetic beauty:—

"Doomed as I am in solitude to waste
The present moments, and regret the past;
Deprived of every joy I valued most,
My friend torn from me, and my mistress lost;
Call not this gloom I wear, this anxious mien,
The dull effect of humor or of spleen.
Still, still I mourn, with each returning day,
Him* snatched by fate in early youth away;
And her through tedious years of doubt and pain,
Fix'd in her choice, and faithful—but in vain!
O, prone to pity, generous and sincere,
Whose eye ne'er yet refused the wretch a tear;
Whose heart the real claim of friendship knows
Nor thinks a lover's are but fancied woes;
See me—ere yet my destined course half done,
Cast forth a wanderer on the world unknown!
See me neglected on the world's rude coast,
Each dear companion of my voyage lost!
Nor ask why clouds of sorrow shade my brow,
And ready tears wait only leave to flow!
Why all that soothes a heart from anguish free,
All that delights the happy, palls with me!"

CHAPTER II.

Entrance into the Temple. Employment there. Depression of his mind. Religious impressions. Visit to Southampton. Sudden removal of sorrow. Death of his father. Appointment to the office of reading clerk in the House of Lords. Dread of appearing in public. Consequent abandonment of the situation. Is proposed as clerk of the Journals. Feelings on the occasion. Visit to Margate. Return to London. Preparation for entering upon his office. Distressing sensations on the occasion. Is compelled to relinquish it for ever. Serious attack of depression. Visit of his brother.

At the age of 21, in 1752, Cowper left the solicitor's house, and took possession of a complete set of chambers in the Inner Temple. Here he remained nearly twelve years. And as this may justly be considered the most valuable part of life, it must ever be regretted that he suffered it to pass away so unprofitably. During this important and lengthened period he scarcely did any thing more than compose a few essays and poems, either to gratify, or to assist some literary friend. Prompted by benevolent motives, he furnished several pieces for a work, entitled "The Connoisseur," edited by Robert Lloyd, Esq., to whom he was sincerely and warmly attached.

The following extract from a most playful poetic epistle, addressed to that gentleman, will be read with interest, as it shows that he began at that time to feel symptoms of the depressive malady, which afterwards became to him a source of so much misery.

"'Tis not that I design to rob
Thee of thy birthright, gentle Bob,
For thou art born sole heir, and single,
Of dear Mat Prior's easy jingle;
Nor that I mean, while thus I knit
My thread-bare sentiments together,
To show my genius, or my wit,
When God and you know I have neither;
Or such as might be better shown,
By letting poetry alone.
'Tis not with either of these views
That I presume to address the muse;
But to divert a fierce banditti
(Sworn foes to every thing that's witty;)
That with a black infernal train,
Make cruel inroads on my brain,
And daily threaten to drive thence
My little garrison of sense;
The fierce banditti which I mean,
Are gloomy thoughts, led on by spleen."

While he remained in the Temple, he cultivated the friendship of the most distinguished writers of the day; and took a lively interest in their publications, as they appeared. Instead, however, of applying his richly furnished mind to the composition of some original work, for which, the pieces he incidentally wrote, proved him fully competent, his timid spirit contented itself with occasional displays of its rich and varied capabilities. Translation from ancient and modern poets was one of his most favorite amusements. So far, however, was he from deriving any benefit from these compositions, most of which were masterly productions, that he invariably distributed them gratuitously among his friends, as they might happen to request them. In this way he assisted his amiable friend and scholar, Mr. Duncombe; for we find in Duncombe's Horace, published by him in 1759, that two of the satires were translated by Cowper.

When Cowper entered the Temple, he paid little or no attention to religion; all those serious impressions which he had once experienced were gone; and he was left, at that dangerous and critical season of life, surrounded by innumerable most powerful temptations, without any other principles for his guide, than the corrupt affections of our common nature. It pleased God, however, at the very outset, to prevent him from pursuing that rash and ruinous career of wickedness, into which many plunge with heedless and awful insensibility. The feelings of his peculiarly sensitive mind on this occasion he thus describes.

"Not long after my settlement in the Temple, I was struck with such a dejection of spirits, as none but those who have felt the same can have the least conception of. Day and night I was upon the rack, lying down in horror, and rising up in despair. I presently lost all relish for those studies to which I had before been closely attached; the classics had no longer any charms for me; I had need of something more salutary than amusement, but I had no one to direct me where to find it.

"At length I met with Herbert's poems; and, gothic and uncouth as they are, I yet found in them a strain of piety which I could not but admire. This was the only author I had any delight in reading. I pored over him all day long; and though I found not in his work what I might have found—a cure for my malady, yet my mind never seemed so much alleviated as while I was reading it. At length I was advised, by a very near and dear relative, to lay it aside, for he thought such an author more likely to nourish my disorder than to remove it.

"In this state of mind I continued near a twelvemonth; when, having experienced the inefficacy of all human means, I at length betook myself to God in prayer. Such is the rank our Redeemer holds in our esteem, that we never resort to him but in the last instance, when all creatures have failed to succor us! My hard heart was at length softened, and my stubborn knees brought to bow. I composed a set of prayers, and made frequent use of them. Weak as my faith was, the Almighty, who will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax, was graciously pleased to listen to my cry, instead of frowning me away in anger.

"A change of scene was recommended to me; and I embraced an opportunity of going with some friends to Southampton, where I spent several months. Soon after our arrival, we walked to a place called Freemantle, about a mile from the town; the morning was clear and calm; the sun shone brightly upon the sea, and the country on the

* Sir William Russell, Bart. a favorite friend of the young poet.

border of it was the most beautiful I had ever seen. We sat down upon an eminence, at the end of that arm of the sea which runs between Southampton and the New Forest. Here it was, that on a sudden, as if another sun had been created that instant in the heavens on purpose to dispel sorrow and vexation of spirit, I felt the weight of all my misery taken off; my heart became light and joyful in a moment; I could have wept with transport had I been alone. I must needs believe that nothing less than the Almighty fiat could have filled me with such inexpressible delight; not by a gradual dawning of peace, but, as it were, with a flash of his life-giving countenance. I felt a glow of gratitude to the Father of mercies for this unexpected blessing, and ascribed it, at first, to his gracious acceptance of my prayers; but Satan and my own wicked heart quickly persuaded me that I was indebted for my deliverance to nothing but a change of scene and the amusing varieties of the place. By this means, he turned the blessing into a poison; teaching me to conclude, that nothing but a continued circle of diversion, and indulgence of appetite, could secure me from a relapse. Acting upon this false and pernicious principle, as soon as I returned to London, I burnt my prayers, and away went all my thoughts of devotion, and of dependence upon God my Saviour. Surely, it was of his mercy that I was not consumed. Glory be to his grace.

"I obtained, at length, so complete a victory over my conscience, that all remonstrances from that quarter were in vain, and in a manner silenced, though sometimes, indeed, a question would arise in my mind, whether it were safe to proceed any farther in a course so plainly and utterly condemned in the Scriptures. I saw clearly, that if the gospel were true, such a conduct must inevitably end in my destruction; but I saw not by what means I could change my Ethiopian complexion, or overcome such an inveterate habit of rebelling against God.

"The next thing that occurred to me at such a time, was a doubt whether the gospel were true or false. To this, succeeded many an anxious wish for the decision of this important question; for I foolishly thought that obedience would follow, were I but convinced that it was worth while to attend to it. Having no reason to expect a miracle, and not hoping to be satisfied with any thing less, I acquiesced, at length, in favor of that impious conclusion, that the only course I could take to secure my present peace, was to wink hard against the prospects of future misery, and to resolve to banish all thoughts of a subject upon which I thought to so little purpose. Nevertheless, when I was in the company of deists, and heard the gospel blasphemed, I never failed to assert the truth of it with much vehemence of disputation, for which I was the better qualified, having been always an industrious and diligent inquirer into the evidences by which it is externally supported. I think I once went so far into a controversy of this kind as to assert, that I would gladly submit to have my right hand cut off, so that I might but be enabled to live according to the gospel. Thus have I been employed in vindicating the truth of Scripture, while in the very act of rebelling against its dictates. Lamentable inconsistency of a convinced judgment with an unsanctified heart!—an inconsistency, indeed, evident to others as well as to myself; inasmuch as a deistical companion of mine, with whom I was disputing upon the subject, cut short the matter by alleging, that if what I said were true, I was certainly condemned, by my own showing."

In 1756, Cowper sustained a heavy domestic loss, in the death of his excellent father, towards whom he had always felt the strongest parental regard. Such, however was the depressed state of his mind at this season, that he was much less affected by the solemn event, than he would probably have been had it occurred at any earlier or later period of his life. Perceiving that he should inherit but little fortune from his father, he now found it necessary to adopt some plan to augment his income. It became every day more apparent to his friends, as well as to himself, that his extreme diffidence precluded the possibility of his being successful in his profession. After much anxiety of mind on this subject, he at length mentioned it to a friend, who had two situations at his disposal, the Reading Clerk, and Clerk of the Journals in the House of Lords—situations, either of which Cowper then thought would suit him, and one of which he expressed a desire to obtain, should a vacancy occur. Quite unexpectedly to him, as well as to his friend, both these places, in a short time afterwards, became vacant; and as the Reading Clerk's was much the more valuable of the two, his friend generously offered it to him, which offer he gladly and gratefully accepted, and he was accordingly appointed to it in his thirty-first year.

All his friends were delighted with this providential opening: he himself, at first, looked forward to it with pleasure, intending, as soon as he was settled, to unite himself with an amiable and accomplished young lady, one of his cousins, for whom he had long cherished a tender attachment. These fond hopes, however, were never realized. The situation required him to appear at the bar of the House of Peers; and the apprehension of this public exhibition quite overwhelmed his meek and gentle spirit. So acute were his distressing apprehensions, that, notwithstanding the previous efforts he made to qualify himself for the office, long before the day arrived that he was to enter upon it, such was the embarrassed and melancholy state of his mind, that he was compelled to relinquish it entirely. His harassed and dejected feelings on this occasion he thus affectingly describes:—

"All the considerations by which I endeavored to compose my mind to its former tranquillity, did but torment me the more, proving miserable comforters, and counsellors of no value. I returned to my chambers, thoughtful and unhappy; my countenance fell; and my friend was astonished, instead of that additional cheerfulness which he might have so reasonably expected, to find an air of deep melancholy in all I said or did. Having been harassed in this manner, by day and night, for the space of a week, perplexed between the apparent folly of casting away the only visible chance I had of being well provided for, and the impossibility of retaining it, I determined at length to write a letter to my friend, though he lodged, in a manner, at the next door, and we generally spent the day together. I did so, and begged him to accept my resignation of the Reading Clerk's place, and to appoint me to the other situation. I was well aware of the disproportion between the value of the appointments, but my peace was gone: pecuniary advantages were not equivalent to what I had lost; and I flattered myself that the Clerkship of the Journals would fall, fairly and easily, within the scope of my abilities. Like a man in a fever, I thought a change of posture would relieve my pain, and, as the event will show, was equally disappointed. My friend, at length, after considerable reluctance, accepted of my resignation, and appointed me to the least profitable office. The matter being thus settled, something like a calm took place in my mind: I was, indeed, not a little concerned about my character, being aware that it must needs suffer by the strange appearance of my proceeding. This, however, being but a small part of the anxiety I had labored under, was hardly felt when the rest was taken off

I thought my path towards an easy maintenance was now plain and open, and, for a day or two, was tolerably cheerful: but behold, the storm was gathering all the while, and the fury of it was not the less violent from this gleam of sunshine.

"A strong opposition to my friend's right of nomination began to show itself. A powerful party was formed among the lords to thwart it, and it appeared plain, that if we succeeded at last, it could only be by fighting our ground by inches. Every advantage, I was told, would be sought for, and eagerly seized, to disconcert us. I was led to expect an examination at the bar of the house, touching my sufficiency for the post I had taken. Being necessarily ignorant of the nature of that business, it became expedient that I should visit the office daily, in order to qualify myself for the strictest scrutiny. All the horror of my fears and perplexities now returned; a thunderbolt would have been as welcome to me as this intelligence. I knew that, upon such terms, the Clerkship of the Journals was no place for me. To require my attendance at the bar of the House, that I might there publicly entitle myself to the office, was, in effect, to exclude me from it. In the mean time, the interest of my friend, the causes of his choice, and my own reputation and circumstances, all urged me forward, and pressed me to undertake that which I saw to be impracticable. They whose spirits are formed like mine, to whom a public exhibition of themselves, on any occasion, is mortal poison, may have some idea of the horror of my situation—others can have none. My continual misery at length brought on a nervous fever: quiet forsook me by day, and peace by night; even a finger raised against me seemed more than I could bear.

"In this posture of mind, I attended regularly at the office, where, instead of a soul upon the rack, the most active spirits were essential to my purpose. I expected no assistance from any one there, all the inferior clerks being under the influence of my opponents; accordingly, I received none. The Journal books were, indeed thrown open to me; a thing which could not be refused, and from which, perhaps, a man in health, with a head turned to business, might have gained all the information wanted, But it was not so with me. I read without perception, and was so distressed, that had every clerk in the office been my friend, it would have availed me little, for I was not in a condition to receive instruction, much less to elicit it from manuscripts, without direction."

The following extract from a letter to his amiable cousin, Lady Hesketh, written 9th August, 1763, through which runs that happy mixture of what may not perhaps improperly be termed, playful seriousness, which distinguishes almost the whole of his epistolary productions, and imparts to them a charm superior to that of almost any other writer, will illustrate the state of his mind at that period. "Having promised to write to you, I make haste to be as good as my word. I have a pleasure in writing to you at any time, but especially at the present, when my days are spent in reading the Journals, and my nights in dreaming of them, an employment not very agreeable to a head that has long been habituated to the luxury of choosing its subject, and has been as little employed upon business, as if it had grown upon the shoulders of a much wealthier gentleman. But the numscull pays for it now, and will not presently forget the discipline it has undergone lately. If I succeed in this doubtful piece of promotion, I shall have at least the satisfaction to reflect upon, that the volumes I write will be treasured up with the utmost care for ages, and will last as long as the English constitution, a duration which ought to satisfy the vanity of any author. Oh, my good cousin! if I was to open my heart to you, I could show you strange sights; nothing, I flatter myself, that would shock you, but a good deal that would make you wonder. I am of a very singular temper, and very unlike all the men that I have ever conversed with. Certainly I am not an absolute fool; but I have more weakness than the greatest of all fools I can recollect at present. In short, if I was as fit for the next world as I am unfit for this—and God forbid that I should speak it in vanity—I would not change conditions with any saint in Christendom. Ever since I was born, I have been good at disappointing the most natural expectations. Many years ago, cousin, there was a possibility that I might prove a very different thing from what I am at present. My character is now fixed, and riveted fast upon me; and, between friends, is not a very splendid one, or likely to be guilty of much fascination."

Many months was Cowper thus employed, constant in the use of means to qualify himself for the office, yet despairing as to the issue. At length he says,

"The vacation being pretty far advanced, I repaired to Margate. There, by the help of cheerful company, a new scene, and the intermission of my painful employment, I presently began to recover my spirits; though even here, for some time after my arrival, (notwithstanding, perhaps, the preceding day had been spent agreeably, and without any disturbing recollection of my circumstances,) my first reflections, when I awoke in the morning, were horrible and full of wretchedness. I looked forward to the approaching winter, and regretted the flight of every moment which brought it nearer, like a man borne away, by a rapid torrent, into a stormy sea, whence he sees no possibility of returning, and where he knows he cannot subsist. By degrees, I acquired such a facility in turning away my thoughts from the ensuing crisis, that, for weeks together, I hardly adverted to it at all: but the stress of the tempest was yet to come, and was not to be avoided by any resolution of mine to look another way.

"How wonderful are the works of the Lord, and his ways past finding out! Thus was he preparing me for an event which I least of all expected, even the reception of his blessed gospel, working by means which, in all human contemplation, must needs seem directly opposite to that purpose, but which, in his wise and gracious disposal, have, I trust, effectually accomplished it."

In October, 1763, Cowper was again required to attend the office, and prepare for the final push. This recalled all his fears, and produced a renewal of all his former misery. On revisiting the scene of his previous ineffectual labors, he felt himself pressed by difficulties on either side, with nothing before him but prospects of gloom and despair. He saw that he must either keep possession of the situation to the last extremity, and thus expose himself to the risk of public rejection for his insufficiency, or relinquish it at once, and thus run the hazard of ruining his benefactor's right of appointment, and losing the only chance he seemed to have of procuring for himself a comfortable competence for life, and of being united to the individual to whom he was most tenderly and affectionately attached.

His terrors on this occasion had become so overwhelming, as to induce that lamented aberration of mind under which he is generally known to have suffered. The dreadful apprehensions which for so long a time had haunted him day and night, leaving him not a moment's interval of peace, had, at length, wound him up to the highest pitch of mental agony. The anguish of his lacerated spirit was inconceivable. The idea of appearing in public was, to his gentle but amiable mind, even more bit-

ter than death. To his disordered perception there appeared no possibility for him to escape from the horrors of his situation, but by an escape from life itself. Death, which he had always shuddered at before, he began ardently to wish for now. He could see nothing before him but difficulties perfectly insurmountable. The supposed ruined state of his pecuniary circumstances—the imagined contempt of his relations and acquaintance—and the apprehended prejudice he should do his patron, urged the fatal expedient upon his shattered intellect, which he now meditated with inexpressible energy.

At this important crisis, when it pleased God, who giveth not to man an account of his proceedings, to permit a cloud, darker than midnight, to gather round the mind of the poet, so that he saw no possible way of escape but the one above alluded to, and when he peculiarly needed the counsel of some judicious and kind friend, it so happened that he fell successively into the company of two most unhappy sophists, who both advanced claims to the right of self-destruction, and whose fallacious arguments won him over to their pernicious views. This was, unhappily, rendered more easy than it otherwise would have been, by his recollection of an impious book which he had read when very young, the arguments of which, though they then appeared to him, in their true light, as utterly inconclusive and perfectly contemptible, now came afresh to his disordered mind, and seemed irrefutable; the situation in which he was now placed, inducing him to catch eagerly at any thing that would justify the means of relief to which he wished to resort. How careful ought all to be, who are intrusted with the education of youth, that no pernicious books may fall into their hands! No evil consequences may, perhaps, arise from it at the time, but who can calculate what may be the future result?

The disordered state of Cowper's mind, at this period, will be seen by the following anecdote. Taking up a newspaper for the day, his eye caught a satirical letter which it happened to contain, and though it had no relation whatever to his case, he doubted not but the writer was fully acquainted with his purpose, and in fact, intended to hasten its execution. Wrought up to a degree of anguish almost unbearable, he now experienced a convulsive agitation that in a manner deprived him of all his powers. Hurried on by the deplorable inducements above related, and perceiving no possibility of escaping from his misery by any other means, all around him wearing only an aspect of gloom and despair, it will be no wonder to the reader, that before the tremendous day approached, the day on which his tender spirit was to have encountered an examination before the House of Lords, he had made several attempts at the escape above alluded to. Most happily, indeed, and most mercifully, for himself and for others, they were only attempts; for it was the will of a gracious Providence, not only to preserve his life for the exercise of a sound and vigorous mind, but to make that mind an instrument of incalculable benefit to his country, and, we may almost say, to the world, by advancing and promoting the best interests of mankind, morality and religion.

The depths of affliction and sorrow which the amiable sufferer now endured, were such that he might truly say with the Psalmist, "All thy waves and thy billows are gone over me. I am troubled, I am bowed down greatly, my heart is pained within me, my sorrow is continually before me; fearfulness and trembling are come upon me. I sink in deep mire where is no standing, I am come into deep waters where the floods overflow me." When at length the long-dreaded day arrived, the approach of which he had feared more than he feared death itself, such were the melancholy results of his distress, that all his friends immediately acquiesced in the propriety of his relinquishing the situation for ever. Thus ended his connection with the House of Lords; unhappily, however, his sufferings did not end here. Despair still inflicted on him its deadliest sting, and he saw not how it could be extracted; Grief poured its full tide of anguish into his heart, and he could perceive nothing before him but one interminable prospect of misery.

"O Providence! mysterious are thy ways!
Inflexible thine everlasting plans!
The finite power of man can ne'er resist
The unseen hand which guides, protects, preserves,
Nor penetrates the inscrutable design
Of Him, whose council is his sovereign will.
Prosperity's bright sun withdraws his beams,
Thick clouds and tempests gather round the sky,
The winds of fierce temptations, and the waves
Of trials fell, assault the feeble bark,
And drive it headlong 'midst the cragged rocks.
We look with wonder on, but seek in vain
The deep designs of Heaven herein to scan;
The sacred page itself reveals not this.
Yet who that knows there is a Power above,
Would not 'assert eternal Providence,
And justify the works of God to man?'"

At this period of the poet's history, it appears desirable to remark, in confutation of those who attribute, or at least endeavor to attribute his malady to his religion, that, viewed either as an originating cause, or in any other light, it can never be proved to have had any connection with it. It will not be denied, that those sacred truths, which, in all cases where they are properly received, prove an unfailing source of the most salutary contemplation to the underanged mind, were in his case, through the distorting medium of his malady, converted into a vehicle of intellectual poison. It is, however, as Dr. Johnson well observes, "a most erroneous and unhappy idea to suppose that those views of Christianity which Cowper adopted, and of which, when enjoying the intervals of reason, after he was brought to the knowledge of them, he was so bright an ornament, had in any degree contributed to excite the malady with which he was afflicted. It is capable of the clearest demonstration that nothing was further from the truth. On the contrary, all those alleviations of sorrow, those delightful anticipations of heavenly rest, those healing consolations to a wounded spirit, of which he was permitted to taste, at the period when interrupted reason resumed its sway, were unequivocally to be ascribed to the operation of those very principles and views of religion, which, in the instance before us, have been charged with producing so opposite an effect. The primary aberration of his mental faculties was wholly to be attributed to other causes," as indeed will satisfactorily appear, by the following affecting description he has given of himself at this period.

"To this moment, I had felt no concern of a spiritual kind: ignorant of original sin; insensible of the guilt of actual transgression, I understood neither the law nor the gospel—the condemning nature of the one, nor the restoring mercies of the other. I was as much unacquainted with Christ in all his saving offices, as if his name had never reached me. Now, therefore, a new scene opened upon me.

"My sins were set in array against me, and I began to see and feel that I had lived without God in the world. One moment I thought myself shut out from mercy by one chapter, and the next by another. The sword of the Spirit seemed to guard the tree of life against my touch, and to flame against me in every avenue by which I attempted to approach it. I particularly remember, that the parable of the bar-

yen fig-tree was to me an inconceivable source of anguish. I applied it to my case, with a strong persuasion that it was a curse pronounced on me by the Saviour.

"In every volume I opened, I found something that struck me to the heart. I remember taking up one; and the first sentence I saw condemned me. Every thing seemed to preach to me, not the gospel of mercy, but the curse of the law. In a word, I saw myself a sinner altogether; but I saw not yet a glimpse of the mercy of God in Christ Jesus the Lord."

Cowper now wrote to his brother to inform him of the afflicting circumstances in which he was placed. His brother immediately paid him a visit, and employed every means in his power to alleviate his distress. All his efforts, however, proved unavailing; he found him almost overwhelmed with despair, pertinaciously maintaining, in spite of all remonstrances to the contrary, that he had been guilty of the unpardonable sin, in not properly improving the mercy of God towards him at Southampton. No favorable construction put upon his conduct in that instance, by his brother, nor any argument he employed, afforded him a moment's alleviation of his distress. He rashly concluded that he had no longer any interest in the atonement, or in the gifts of the Spirit, and that nothing was left for him but the dismal prospect of eternally enduring the wrath of God. His brother, pierced to the heart at the sight of his misery, used every means to comfort him, but all to no purpose; so deeply seated was his depression, that it rendered utterly useless all the soothing reflections that were suggested.

At this trying period Cowper remembered his friend and relative, the Rev. Martin Madan; and, though he had always considered him as an enthusiast, he was now convinced that, if there was any balm in Gilead for him, Mr. Madan was the only person who could administer it. His friend lost no time in paying him a visit; and perceiving the state of his mind, he began immediately to declare unto him the gospel of Christ. He spoke of original sin, of the corruption of every man born into the world; of the efficacy of the atonement made by Jesus Christ; of the Redeemer's compassion for lost sinners, and of the full salvation provided for them in the gospel. He then adverted to the Saviour's intercession; described him as a compassionate Redeemer, who felt deeply interested in the welfare of every true penitent, who could sympathize with those who were in distress, and who was able to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by him. To this important information Cowper listened with the greatest attention; hope seemed to dawn upon his disconsolate mind; his heart burned within him whilst he listened to the word of life; his soul was pierced with a sense of his great ingratitude to so merciful a Saviour; tears of contrition burst from his eyes; he saw clearly that this was the remedy his case required; and felt fully persuaded that this was indeed the gospel of salvation. He, however, wanted that faith without which he could not recover its blessings. He saw the suitability of this gospel to his circumstances, but saw not yet how one, so vile as he conceived himself to be, could hope to partake of its benefits.

Mr. Madan urged the necessity of a lively faith in the Redeemer, not as an assent of the understanding only, but as the cordial belief of the heart unto righteousness; assured him, that though faith was the gift of God, yet was it a gift that our heavenly Father was most willing to bestow, not on one only, but on all that sought it by earnest and persevering prayer. Cowper deeply deplored the want of this faith, and could only reply to his friend's remarks, in a brief but very sincere petition, "Most earnestly do I wish it would please God to bestow it on *me*."

His brother, perceiving he had received some benefit from this interview, in his desire to relieve the poet's depressed mind, wisely overlooked the difference of sentiments on the great subjects of religion, which then existed between himself and Mr. Madan, and discovered the greatest anxiety that he should embrace the earliest opportunity to converse with him again. He now urged Cowper to visit Mr. Madan at his own house, and offered to accompany him thither. After much entreaty, Cowper consented; and though the conversation was not then the means of affording him any permanent relief, it was not without its use. He was easier, but not easy; the wounded spirit within him was less in pain, but by no means healed. A long train of still greater terrors than any he had yet endured was at hand; and when he awoke the next morning, after a few hours' sleep, he seemed to feel a stronger alienation from God than ever. He was now again the subject of the deepest mental anguish; the sorrows of death seemed to encompass, and the pains of hell to get hold of him; his ears rang with the sound of the torments that seemed to await him; his terrified imagination presented to him many horrible visions, and led him to conceive that he heard many horrible sounds; his heart seemed at every pulse to beat its last; his conscience scared him; the avenger of blood seemed to pursue him; and he saw no city of refuge into which he could flee; every moment he expected the earth would open, and swallow him up.

He was now suddenly attacked with that nervous affection, of which the peculiar form of his mind seemed to have made him susceptible, which on several subsequent occasions darkened his brightest prospects, and which ultimately overwhelmed his meek and gentle spirit, and caused him to end his days in circumstances the most gloomy and sorrowful. So violent was the attack on this occasion, that his friends instantly perceived the change, and consulted on the best manner to dispose of him. Dr. Cotton then kept an establishment at St. Alban's for the reception of such patients. His skill as a physician, his well known humanity and sweetness of temper, and the acquaintance that had subsisted between him and the afflicted patient, slight as it was, determined them to place him under the doctor's care. No determination could have been more wisely taken; and subsequent events proved it to have been under His superintendence, who orders all things according to the councils of his own will, and who, with the tenderest solicitude, watches over his people; managing those events which to us appear contingent, on principles of unerring wisdom; and overruling them for the accomplishment of his gracious and benevolent intentions.

"An anxious world may sigh in vain for what
Kind Heaven decrees in goodness to withhold;
But the momentous volume of his mind,
When seen in yonder world, shall be approved,
And all its plans pronounced unerring love."

CHAPTER III.

His removal to St. Alban's. Painful state of his mind there. Receives a visit from his brother. Good effects of it. His recovery. How it was effected. His subsequent happiness. Pleasing conversation with Dr. Cotton. The delightful manner in which he now passed his time. Description of his experience. His gratitude to God. Employs his brother to look out for him a new residence Leaves St. Alban's. Feelings on the occasion.

On the 7th December, 1763, he was removed to St. Alban's, and placed under the care of Dr. Cotton. And, notwithstanding the skilful and judicious treatment pursued to effect his restoration,

he remained in the same gloomy and desponding state for five months. Every means that ingenuity could devise, and that benevolence and tenderness could prompt, were resorted to for this protracted period in vain. To describe in lengthened detail the state of his mind during this long interval, would justly be deemed injudicious As Mr. Hayley very properly remarks, "Mental derangement is a topic of such awful delicacy, that it is the duty of a biographer, rather to sink in tender silence, than to proclaim with offensive temerity, the minute particulars of a calamity to which all human beings are exposed, and perhaps, in proportion as they have received from nature, those delightful but dangerous gifts—a heart of exquisite tenderness, and a mind of creative energy." This, as Cowper most beautifully sings:—

"This is a sight for pity to peruse,
Till she resembles faintly what she views;
This, of all maladies that man infest,
Claims most compassion and receives the least."

Without, however, entering minutely into particulars, on this painful subject, it will not be deemed improper to mention some of the leading facts respecting it, and here we shall allow the poet again to become his own biographer.

"The accuser of the brethren was ever busy with me night and day, bringing to my recollection, the commission of long forgotten sins, and charging upon my conscience, things of an indifferent nature as atrocious crimes. Conviction of sin, and despair of mercy, were the two prominent evils with which I was continually tormented. But, blessed be the God of my salvation for every sigh I drew, and for every tear I shed, since thus it pleased him to judge me here, that I might not be judged hereafter.

"After five months' continued expectation that the divine vengeance would plunge me into the bottomless pit, I became so familiar with despair, as to have contracted a sort of hardiness and indifference as to the event. I began to persuade myself, that while the execution of the sentence was suspended, it would be for my interest to indulge a less horrible train of ideas, than I had been accustomed to muse upon. I entered into conversation with the doctor, laughed at his stories, and told him some of my own to match them; still, however, carrying a sentence of irrevocable doom in my heart. He observed the seeming alteration with pleasure, and began to think my recovery well nigh completed; but the only thing that could promote and effectuate my cure, was yet wanting; an experimental knowledge of the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.

"About this time my brother came from Cambridge to pay me a visit. Dr. C. having informed him, that he thought me better, he was disappointed at finding me almost as silent and reserved as ever. As soon as we were left alone, he asked me how I found myself; I answered, as much better as despair can make me. We went together into the garden. Here, on my expressing a settled assurance of sudden judgment, he protested to me that it was all a delusion; and protested so strongly, that I could not help giving some attention to him. I burst into tears, and cried out, If it be a delusion, then am I the happiest of beings. Something like a ray of hope was now shot into my heart, but still I was afraid to indulge it. We dined together, and I spent the afternoon in a more cheerful manner. Something seemed to whisper to me, every moment, still there is mercy. Even after he left me, this change of sentiment gathered round continually; yet, my mind was in such a fluctuating state, that I can only call it a vague presage of better things at hand, without being able to assign any reason for it.

"A few days after my arrival at St. Alban's, I had thrown aside the Bible as a book in which I had no longer any interest or portion. The only instance in which I can recollect reading a single chapter, was about two months before my recovery. Having found a Bible on the bench in the garden, I opened it upon the 11th of John, where the miracle of Lazarus being raised from the dead is described; and I saw so much benevolence, goodness, and mercy, in the Saviour's conduct, that I almost shed tears at the relation, little thinking that it was an exact type of the mercy, which Jesus was on the point of extending towards myself. I sighed, and said, Oh, that I had not rejected so good a Redeemer, that I had not forfeited all his favor! Thus was my hard heart softened; and though my mind was not yet enlightened, God was gradually preparing me for the light of his countenance, and the joys of his salvation.

"The cloud of horror which had so long hung over my mind began rapidly to pass away, every moment came fraught with hopes. I felt persuaded that I was not utterly doomed to destruction. The way of salvation was still, however, hid from my eyes; nor did I see it clearer than before my illness. I only thought, that if it pleased God to spare me, I would lead a better life; and that I would yet escape hell, if a religious observance of my duty would secure me from it. Thus, may the terror of the Lord make a pharisee; but only the sweet voice of mercy in the gospel can make a Christian.

"But the happy period, which was to shake off my fetters, and afford me a clear discovery of the free mercy of God in Christ Jesus was now arrived. I flung myself into a chair, near the window, and seeing a Bible there, ventured once more to apply to it for comfort and instruction. The first verse I saw, was the 25th of the 3d of Romans: '*Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.*' Immediately I received strength to believe, and the full beams of the sun of righteousness shone upon me. I saw the sufficiency of the atonement he had made for my pardon and complete justification. In a moment I believed, and received the peace of the gospel. Whatever my friend Madan had said to me, long before, revived in all its clearness, with the demonstration of the spirit, and with power.

"Unless the Almighty arm had been under me, I think I should have been overwhelmed with gratitude and joy. My eyes filled with tears, and my voice choked with transport. I could only look up to heaven in silent fear, overwhelmed with love and wonder. But the work of the Holy Spirit is best described in his own words:—it is '*Joy unspeakable and full of glory.*' Thus was my heavenly father in Christ Jesus, pleased to give me the full assurance of faith; and, out of a strong, unbelieving heart, to raise up a child unto Abraham. How glad should I now have been to have spent every moment in prayer and thanksgiving! I lost no opportunity of repairing to the throne of grace; but flew to it with an earnestness irresistible, and never to be satisfied. Could I help it? Could I do otherwise than love and rejoice in my reconciled Father in Christ Jesus? The Lord had enlarged my heart, and I could now cheerfully run in the way of his commandments.

"For many succeeding weeks tears would be ready to flow if I did but speak of the gospel, or mention the name of Jesus. To rejoice day and night was all my employment; too happy to sleep much, I thought it but lost time that was thus spent. Oh, that the ardor of my first love had continued! But I have known many a lifeless and unhallowed hour

since; long intervals of darkness, interrupted by short returns of peace and joy in believing!"

His excellent physician, ever watchful and apprehensive for his welfare, now became alarmed, lest the sudden transition, from despair to joy, should wholly overpower his mind; but the Lord was his strength and his song, and had become his salvation. Christ was now formed in his heart, the hope of glory; his fears were all dispelled; despair, with its horrid train of evils, was banished from his mind; a new and delightful scene was now opened before him; he became the subject of new affections, new desires, and new joys; in a word, old things were passed away, and all things were become new. God had brought him up out of the horrible pit, and out of the miry clay, and had put a new song into his mouth, even praise to his God. He felt the full force of that liberty, of which he afterwards so sweetly sung—

——————— "A liberty unsung
By poets, and by senators unpraised,
. . . . . .
E'en liberty of heart, derived from heaven;
Bought with his blood who gave it to mankind,
And sealed with the same token!"

The apprehensions of Dr. C. soon subsided; he saw with delight undoubted proofs of his patient's perfect recovery, became satisfied with the soundness of his cure, and subsequently had much sweet communion with him in conversing about the great things of salvation. He now visited him every morning, as long as he remained under his care, which was near twelve months after his recovery, and the gospel was invariably the delightful theme of their conversation. The patient and the physician became thus every day more endeared to each other; and Cowper often afterwards looked back upon this period, as among the happiest days he had ever spent.

His time no longer hung heavily upon his hands; but every moment of it that he could command was employed in seeking to acquire more comprehensive views of the gospel. The Bible became his constant companion; from this pure fountain of truth he drank of that living water, which was in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life. Conversation on spiritual subjects afforded him a high degree of enjoyment. Many delightful seasons did he spend thus employed, while he remained with his beloved physician. His first transports of joy having subsided, a sweet serenity of spirit succeeded, uninterrupted by any of those distressing sensations which he had before experienced; prayer and praise were his daily employment; his heart overflowed with love to his Redeemer, and his meditation of him was sweet. In his own expressive and beautiful lines, he felt—

"Ere yet mortality's fine threads gave way,
A clear escape from tyrannizing sin,
And full immunity from penal woe."

His application to the study of the Scriptures must at this time have been intense; for in the short space of twelve months he acquired comprehensive and scriptural views of the great plan of redemption; and, in addition to this, his conceptions of real Christian experience, as distinguished from delusion and hypocrisy, were accurate and striking, and such as one would only have expected from an experienced Christian. He now composed two hymns, which exhibit an interesting proof of the scriptural character of those religious views he had then embraced. These hymns he himself styles specimens of his first Christian thoughts. Delightful specimens indeed they are; and the circumstances under which they were composed will greatly enhance their value in the minds of those to whom they have long been endeared by their own intrinsic excellence. The first is upon Revelation xxi. 5; the second is entitled Retirement. The following lines of it are so touchingly beautiful, so correctly descriptive of the overflowings of his heart in solitude, while he walked with God, and was a stranger in the earth, having left his own connections, and not yet found new ones in the church; and breathe throughout in strains so pure, tender, and unreserved, the language of the Christian's first love, that they cannot fail to be read with deep interest.

"The calm retreat, the silent shade,
With prayer and praise agree;
And seem by thy sweet bounty made
For those who follow thee.

There, if thy Spirit touch the soul,
And grace her mean abode,
Oh, with what peace, and joy, and love,
She communes with her God.

There like the nightingale she pours
Her solitary lays;
Nor asks a witness of her song,
Nor thirsts for human praise."

His letters, written about this period, as well as those of a subsequent date, abound with proofs of his deep acquaintance with Christian experience. The following remarks are taken from a letter to Mrs. Cowper. "The deceitfulness of the natural heart is inconceivable. I know well that I passed among my friends for a person at least religiously inclined, if not actually religious; and what is more wonderful, I thought myself a Christian when I had no faith in Christ, and when I saw no beauty in him that I should desire him; in short, when I had neither faith, nor love, nor any Christian grace whatever, but a thousand seeds of rebellion instead, evermore springing up in enmity against him; but, blessed be the God of my salvation, the hail of affliction and rebuke has swept away the refuge of lies. It pleased the Almighty, in great mercy, to set all my misdeeds before me. At length, the storm being past, a quick and peaceful serenity of soul succeeded, such as ever attends the gift of a lively faith in the all-sufficient atonement, and the sweet sense of mercy and pardon purchased by the blood of Christ. Thus did he break me and bind me up; thus did he wound me and make me whole. This, however, is but a summary account of my conversion; neither would a volume contain the astonishing particulars of it. If we meet again in this world, I will relate them to you; if not, they will serve for the subject of a conference in the next, where, I doubt not, we shall remember, and record them with a gratitude better suited to the subject."

In another letter to his amiable and accomplished cousin, Lady Hesketh, he thus writes. "Since the visit you were so kind as to pay me in the Temple, (the only time I ever saw you without pleasure,) what have I not suffered? And since it has pleased God to restore me to the use of my reason, what have I not enjoyed? You know by experience how pleasant it is to feel the first approaches of health after a fever; but oh! the fever of the brain! to feel the quenching of that fire, is indeed a blessing which I think it impossible to receive without the most consummate gratitude. Terrible as this chastisement is, I acknowledge in it the hand of infinite justice; nor is it at all more difficult for me to perceive in it the hand of infinite mercy; when I consider the effect it has had upon me, I am exceedingly thankful for it, and esteem it the greatest blessing, next to life itself, I ever received from the divine bounty. I pray God I may ever retain the sense of it, and then I am sure I shall continue to be, as I am at present, really happy. My affliction has taught me a road to happiness, which, without

it, I should never have found; and I know, and have experience of it every day, that the mercy of God to the believer is more than sufficient to compensate for the loss of every other blessing. You will believe that my happiness is no dream, because I have told you the foundation on which it is built. What I have written would appear like enthusiasm to many, for we are apt to give that name to every warm affection of the mind in others, which we have not experienced ourselves; but to you, who have so much to be thankful for, and a temper inclined to gratitude, it will not appear so."

To the same lady, a day or two afterwards, he writes—"How naturally does affliction make us Christians! and how impossible is it, when all human help is vain, and the whole earth too poor and trifling to furnish us with one moment's peace, how impossible is it then to avoid looking at the gospel! It gives me some concern, though at the same time it increases my gratitude to reflect, that a convert made in Bedlam is more likely to be a stumbling-block to others than to advance their faith. But if it have that effect upon any, it is owing to their reasoning amiss, and drawing their conclusion from false premises. He who can ascribe an amendment of life and manners, and a reformation of the heart itself, to madness, is guilty of an absurdity, that in any other case would fasten the imputation of madness upon himself; for, by so doing, he ascribes a reasonable effect to an unreasonable cause, and a positive effect to a negative. But when Christianity only is to be sacrificed, he that stabs deepest is always the wisest man. You, my dear cousin, yourself, will be apt to think I carry the matter too far; and that in the present warmth of my heart, I make too ample a concession in saying that I am *only now* a convert. You think I always believed, and I thought so too; but you were deceived, and so was I. I called myself indeed a Christian, but he who knows my heart knows that I never did a right thing, nor abstained from a wrong one, because I was so; but if I did either, it was under the influence of some other motive. And it is such seeming Christians, such pretending believers, that do most mischief in the cause, and furnish the strongest arguments to support the infidelity of its enemies: unless profession and conduct go together, the man's life is a lie, and the validity of what he professes itself, is called in question. The difference between a Christian and an unbeliever, would be so striking, if the treacherous allies of the church would go over at once to the other side, that I am satisfied religion would be no loser by the bargain. You say, you hope it is not necessary for salvation to undergo the same affliction that I have undergone. No! my dear cousin, God deals with his children as a merciful father; he does not, as he himself tells, afflict us willingly. Doubtless there are many, who, having been placed by his good orovidence out of the reach of evil, and the influence of bad example, have, from their very infancy, been partakers of the grace of his Holy Spirit, in such a manner, as never to have allowed themselves in any grievous offence against him. May you love him more and more, day by day, as every day while you think of him you will find him more worthy of your love, and may you be finally accepted by him for his sake, whose intercession for all his faithful servants cannot but prevail."

In the same letter he thus expresses his gratitude to God for placing him under the care of Dr. Cotton:—"I reckon it one instance of the providence that has attended me through this whole event, that I was not delivered into the hands of some London physician, but was carried to Dr. Cotton. I was not only treated by him with the greatest tenderness while I was ill, and attended with the utmost diligence, but when my reason was restored to me, and I had so much need of a religious friend to converse with, to whom I could open my mind upon the subject without reserve, I could hardly have found a better person for the purpose. My eagerness and anxiety to settle my opinions upon that long neglected point, made it necessary, that while my mind was yet weak, and my spirits uncertain, I should have some assistance. The doctor was as ready to administer relief to me in this article likewise, and as well qualified to do it, as in that which was more immediately his province. How many physicians would have thought this an irregular appetite, and a symptom of remaining madness! But if it were so, my friend was as mad as myself, and it is well for me that he was so. My dear cousin, you know not half the deliverances I have received; my brother is the only one in the family who does. My recovery is indeed a signal one, and my future life must express my thankfulness, for by words I cannot do it."

He now employed his brother to seek out for him an abode somewhere in the neighborhood of Cambridge, as he had determined to leave London, the scene of his former misery; and that nothing might induce him to return thither, he resigned the office of commissioner of bankrupts, worth about 60*l.* per annum, which he still held. By this means, he reduced himself to an income barely sufficient for his maintenance; but he relied upon the gracious promise of God, that bread should be given him, and water should be sure.

On being informed that his brother had made many unsuccessful attempts to procure him a suitable dwelling, he, one day, poured out his soul in prayer to God, beseeching him, that wherever he should be pleased, in his fatherly mercy, to place him, it might be in the society of those who feared his name, and loved the Lord Jesus in sincerity. This prayer, God was pleased graciously to answer. In the beginning of June, 1765, he received a letter from his brother to say, he had engaged such lodgings for him at Huntingdon, as he thought would suit him. Though this was farther from Cambridge, where his brother then resided, than he wished, yet, as he was now in perfect health, and as his circumstances required a less expensive way of life than his present, he resolved to take them, and arranged his affairs accordingly.

On the 17th of June, 1765, having spent more than eighteen months at St. Alban's, partly in the bondage of despair, and partly in the liberty of the gospel, he took leave of the place, at four in the morning, and set out for Cambridge, taking with him the servant who had attended him while he remained with Dr. Cotton, and who had maintained an affectionate watchfulness over him during the whole of his illness, waiting upon him, on all occasions, with the greatest patience, and invariably treating him with the greatest kindness. The mingled emotions of his mind on leaving the place were painful and pleasing; he regarded it as the place of second nativity; he had here passed from death unto life—had been favored with much leisure to study the word of God—had enjoyed much happiness in conversing upon its great truths with his esteemed physician; and he left it with considerable reluctance; offering up many prayers to God, that his richest blessings might rest upon its worthy manager, and upon all its inmates.

The state of his mind on this occasion he thus affectionately describes:—"I remembered the pollution which is in the world, and the sad share I had in it myself, and my heart ached at the thought of entering it again. The blessed God had endowed me with some concern for his glory, and I was fearful of hearing his name traduced by oaths and blasphe-

mies, the common language of this highly-favored but ungrateful country; but the promise of God, 'Fear not, I am with thee,' was my comfort. I passed the whole of my journey in fervent prayer to God, earnestly but silently entreating Him to be my guardian and counsellor in all my future journey through life, and to bring me in safety, when he had accomplished his purposes of grace and mercy towards me, to eternal glory."

CHAPTER IV.

Removal to Huntingdon. Sensations there. Engages in public worship for the first time after his recovery. Delight it afforded him. Commences a regular correspondence with some of his friends. Pleasure he experienced in writing on religious subjects. Anxiety of his mind for the spiritual welfare of his former associates. Attributes their continuance in sin chiefly to infidelity. Folly of this. Beauty of the Scriptures. Absurdity of attributing events to second causes, instead of to the overruling providence of God. Dependence upon Divine direction the best support in affliction. Forms some new connections. Becomes acquainted with the Unwin family. Happiness he experienced in their company.

After spending a few days with his brother at Cambridge, Cowper repaired to Huntingdon, and entered upon his new abode, on Saturday, the 22d of June, 1765; taking with him the servant he had brought from St. Alban's, to whom he had become strongly attached for the great kindness he had shown him in his affliction. His brother, who had accompanied him thither, had no sooner left him, than finding himself alone, surrounded by strangers, in a strange place, his spirits began to sink, and he felt like a traveller in the midst of an inhospitable desert; without a friend to comfort, or a guide to direct him. He walked forth, towards the close of the day, in this melancholy frame of mind, and having wandered about a mile from the town, he found his heart so powerfully drawn towards the Lord, that on gaining a secret and retired nook in the corner of a field, he kneeled down under a bank, and poured out his complaints unto God. It pleased his merciful Father to hear him; the load was removed from his mind, and he was enabled to trust in Him that careth for the stranger; to roll his burden upon Him, and to rest assured, that wherever God might cast his lot, he would still be his guardian and shield.

The following day he went to church, for the first time after his recovery. Throughout the whole of the service, his emotions were so powerfully affecting, that it was with much difficulty he could restrain them, so much did he see of the beauty and glory of the Lord while thus worshipping Him in his temple. His heart was full of love to all the congregation, especially to such as seemed serious and attentive. Such was the goodness of God to him, that he gave him the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; and, though he joined not with the congregation in singing the praises of his God, being prevented by the intenseness of his feelings, yet his soul sung within him, and leaped for joy. The parable of the prodigal son was the portion of Scripture read in the gospel appointed for the day. He saw himself in that glass so clearly, and the loving kindness of his slighted and forgotten Lord, that the whole scene was realized by him, and acted over in his heart. And he thus describes his feelings on hearing it:—"When the gospel for the day was read, it seemed more than I could well support. Oh, what a word is the word of God, when the Spirit quickens us to receive it, and gives the hearing ear, and the understanding heart! The harmony of heaven is in it, and discovers clearly and satisfactorily its author."

Immediately after church he repaired to the place where he had prayed the day before, and found the relief he had there received was but the earnest of a richer blessing. The Lord was pleased to visit him with his gracious presence, he seemed to speak to him face to face, as a man speaketh to his friend; He made all His goodness pass before him, and constrained him to say with Jacob, not "how dreadful," but "how lovely is this place! This is the house of God, and the gate of heaven."

He remained four months in the lodgings procured for him by his brother, secluded from the bustling and active scenes of life, and receiving only an occasional visit from some of his neighbors. Though he had little intercourse with men, yet he enjoyed much fellowship with God in Christ Jesus Living by faith, and thus tasting the joys of the unseen world, his solitude was sweet, his meditations were delightful, and he wanted no other enjoyments. He now regularly corresponded with all his intimate friends, and his letters furnish the clearest proofs of the happy, and indeed almost enviable, state of his mind, during this period. To Lady Hesketh, in a letter dated July 5, 1765, he thus discloses his feelings:—"I should have written to you from St. Alban's long ago, but was willing to perform quarantine, as well for my own sake, as because I thought my letters would be more satisfactory to you from any other quarter. You will perceive I allowed myself sufficient time for the purpose, for I date my recovery from the latter end of last July, having been ill seven, and well twelve months. About that time my brother came to see me; I was far from well when he arrived, yet, though he only remained one day, his company served to put to flight a thousand deliriums and delusions which I still labored under.

"As far as I am acquainted with my new residence, I like it extremely. Mr. Hodgson, the minister of the parish, made me a visit yesterday. He is very sensible, a good preacher, and conscientious in the discharge of his duty; he is well known to Dr. Newton, Bishop of Bristol, the author of the Treatise on the Prophecies, the most demonstrable proof of the truth of Christianity, in my mind, that was ever published."

In another letter, a few days afterwards, to the same lady, he thus writes:—"Mentioning Newton's Treatise on the Prophecies brings to my mind an anecdote of Dr. Young, who you know died lately at Welwyn. Dr. Cotton, who was intimate with him, paid him a visit about a fortnight before he was seized with his last illness. The old man was then in perfect health; the antiquity of his person, the gravity of his utterance, and the earnestness with which he discoursed about religion, gave him, in the doctor's eye, the appearance of a prophet. They had been delivering their sentiments on Newton's Treatise, when Young closed the conference thus:—'My friend, there are two considerations upon which my faith in Christ is built as upon a rock—first, the fall of man, the redemption of man, and the resurrection of man; these three cardinal articles of our holy religion are such as human ingenuity could never have invented, therefore they *must* be divine: the other is the fulfilment of prophecy, of which there is abundant demonstration. This proves that the Scripture must be the word of God, and if so, Christianity must be true.'"

Cowper now lived in the full enjoyment of religion. Its truths supported his mind, and furnished him with an ample field for meditation; its promises consoled him, freed him from every distressing sensation, and filled him with joy unspeakable and full of glory; its duties regulated all his conduct, and his chief anxiety was to live entirely to the glory of God. The following beautiful lines of

the poet are strikingly descriptive of his feelings at this period:—

"I was a stricken deer, that left the herd
Long since; with many an arrow deep enfix'd
My panting sides were charged, when I withdrew
To seek a tranquil death in distant shades.
There was I found by one who had himself
Been hurt by th' archers: in his sides he bore,
And in his hands and feet, the cruel scars.
With gentle force soliciting the darts,
He drew them forth, and heal'd, and bade me live.
Since then, with few associates, in remote
And silent woods I wander, far from those
My former partners of the peopled scene;
With few associates, and not wishing more,
Here much I ruminate, as much I may,
With other views of men and manners now
Than once; and others of a life to come."

On all affairs connected with religion, Cowper now delighted to think and to converse, and his best letters were those in which he could freely introduce them to his correspondents. In the close of the letter from which we made the above extract, he thus writes:—"My dear cousin, how happy am I in having a friend to whom I can open my heart upon these subjects! I have many intimates in the world, and have had many more than I shall have hereafter, to whom a long letter upon those most important articles would appear tiresome at least, if not impertinent. But I am not afraid of meeting with that reception from you, who have never yet made it your interest that there should be no truth in the word of God. May this everlasting truth be your comfort while you live, and attend you with peace and joy in your last moments. I love you too well not to make this a part of my prayers; and when I remember my friends on these occasions, there is no likelihood that you can be forgotten."

In another letter to Lady Hesketh, dated 1st of August, 1765, he thus adverts to the character of his former associates, and feelingly expresses his anxiety for their spiritual welfare:—"I have great reason to be thankful I have lost none of my acquaintance but those whom I determined not to keep: I am sorry this class is so numerous. What would I not give, that every friend I have in the world were not almost, but altogether Christians? My dear cousin, I am half afraid to talk to you in this style, lest I should seem to indulge a censorious humor, instead of hoping, as I ought, the best of all men. But what can be said against ocular proof, and what is hope when built upon presumption? To use the most holy name in the universe for no purpose, or a bad one, contrary to his own express commandment, to pass the day, and the succeeding days, weeks, and months, and years, without one act of private devotion, one confession of our sins, or one thanksgiving for the numberless blessings we enjoy; to hear the word of God in public with a distracted attention, or with none at all; to absent ourselves voluntarily from the blessed communion, and to live in the total neglect of it; are the common and ordinary liberties which the generality of professors allow themselves: and what is this, but to live without God in the world? Many causes might be assigned for this anti-christian spirit so prevalent among professors, but one of the principal I take to be their utter forgetfulness that the Bible which they have in their possession is, in reality, the Word of God. My friend, Sir William Russell, was distantly related to a very accomplished man, who, though he never believed the gospel, admired the Scriptures as the sublimest compositions in the world, and read them often. I have myself been intimate with a man of fine taste, who has confessed to me, that though he could not subscribe to the truth of Christianity itself, yet he never could read St. Luke's account of our Saviour's appearance to his two disciples going to Emmaus, without being wonderfully affected by it; and he thought, that if the stamp of divinity was any where to be found in Scripture, it was strongly marked and visibly impressed upon that passage. If these men, whose hearts were chilled with the darkness of infidelity, could find such charms in the mere style of Scripture, what must those find whose eyes could penetrate deeper than the letter, and who firmly believed themselves interested in all the invaluable privileges of the gospel? Had this mere man of taste searched a little further, he might have found other parts of the sacred history as strongly marked with the characters of Divinity as that he mentioned. The parable of the prodigal son, the most beautiful fiction that ever was invented; our Saviour's speech to his disciples, with which he closes his earthly ministration, full of the sublimest dignity and tenderest affection, surpass every thing that I ever read, and, like the spirit with which they were dictated, fly directly to the heart. If the Scripture did not disdain all affectation of ornament, one should call such as these its ornamental parts; but the matter of it is that upon which it principally stakes its credit with us, and the style, however excellent, is only one of the many external evidences by which it recommends itself to our belief."

The warmest expressions of his gratitude to God for his distinguishing goodness to him, during his affliction, were frequently employed in his letters. In one, dated 4th September, 1765, he thus writes to his cousin:—"Two of my friends have been cut off during my illness, in the midst of such a life as it is frightful to reflect upon, and here am I, in better health and spirits than I can ever remember to have enjoyed, after having spent months in the apprehension of instant death. How mysterious are the ways of Providence! Why did I receive grace and mercy? Why was I preserved, afflicted for my good, received, as I trust, into favor, and blessed with the greatest happiness I can ever know, or hope for in this life, while these were overtaken by the great arrest, unawakened, unrepenting, and every way unprepared for it? His infinite wisdom, to whose infinite mercy I owe it all, can solve these questions, and none else. A free-thinker, as many a man miscalls himself, would, without doubt, say, 'Sir, you were in great danger, and had, indeed, a most fortunate escape.' How excessively foolish, as well as shocking, is such language! As if life depended upon luck, and all that we are, or can be, all that we have now, or can hope for hereafter, could possibly be referred to accident. To this freedom of thought it is owing, that he, who is thoroughly apprized of the death of the meanest of his creatures, is supposed to leave those whom he has made in his own image, to the mercy of chance; and to this it is likewise owing, that the correction which our heavenly Father bestows upon us, that we may be fitted to receive his blessing, is so often disappointed of its benevolent intention. Fevers, and all diseases, are regarded as accidents; and long life, health, recovery from sickness, as the gift of the physician. No man can be a greater friend to the use of means upon these occasions than myself; for it were presumption and enthusiasm to neglect them. God has endued them with salutary properties on purpose that we might avail ourselves of them. But to impute our recovery to the medicine, and to carry our views no further, is to rob God of his honor. He that thinks thus, may as well fall upon his knees at once, and return thanks to the medicine that cured him, for it was certainly more immediately instrumental in his recovery than either the apothecary or the doctor."

No one ever watched more carefully the providence of God than Cowper. His views of it were just and scriptural, as is abundantly evident by the above remarks, and, if possible, more clearly evinced by the following extracts from the same excellent letter:—"My dear cousin, a firm persuasion of the superintendence of Providence over all our concerns, is absolutely necessary to our happiness.—Without it we cannot be said to believe in the Scripture, or practise any thing like resignation to his will. If I am convinced that no affliction can befall me without the permission of God, I am convinced likewise that he sees, and knows, that I am afflicted; believing this, I must, in the same degree, believe that if I pray to him for deliverance he hears me; I must needs know likewise, with equal assurance, that if he hears, he will deliver me: I may rest well assured that he has none but the most benevolent intention in declining it. He made us, not because we could add to his happiness, which was always perfect, but that we might be happy ourselves; and will he not in all his dispensations towards us, even in the minutest, consult that end for which he made us? To suppose the contrary, is to affront every one of his attributes, and to renounce utterly our dependence upon him. In this view it will appear plainly, that the line of duty is not stretched too tight, when we are told that we ought to accept every thing at his hands as a blessing, and to be thankful even when we smart under the rod of iron with which he sometimes rules us. Without this persuasion, every blessing, however we may think ourselves happy in the possession of it, loses its greatest recommendation, and every affliction is intolerable. Death itself must be welcome to him who has this faith; and he who has it not must aim at it, if he is not a madman." The excellence of these extracts from Cowper's correspondence will, it is hoped, be admitted by every reader as a sufficient apology for the interruption they may occasion to our narrative. They might be greatly enlarged; but it is not intended to admit any, except such as will, in some degree at least, serve to describe his character.

It was not to be expected that a person like Cowper could remain long unnoticed, how reserved soever was his conduct. Accordingly, he had been at Huntingdon only a short time before he was visited by several persons, and introduced into several families, all eminently distinguished for their respectability, and general consistency of conduct. This soon endeared him to the place, and he thus communicated his sentiments respecting it to his correspondents:—"The longer I live here the better I like the place, and the people who belong to it. I am upon very good terms with five families, all of whom receive me with the utmost cordiality. You may recollect that I had but very uncomfortable expectations of the accommodations I should meet with in Huntingdon. How much better is it to take our lot, where it shall please Providence to cast it, without anxiety! Had I chosen for myself, it is impossible I could have fixed upon a place so agreeable to me in all respects. I so much dreaded the thought of having a new acquaintance to make with no other recommendation than that of being a perfect stranger, that I heartily wished no creature here might take the least notice of me. Instead of which, in about two months after my arrival, I became known to all the visitable people here, and do verily think it the most agreeable neighborhood I ever saw. My brother and I meet every week by an alternate reciprocation of intercourse, as Sam Johnson would express it. As to my own personal condition, I am much happier than the day is long; and sunshine and candle-light alike, see me perfectly contented. I get books in abundance, as much company as I choose, a deal of comfortable leisure, and enjoy better health, I think, than for many years past. What is there wanting to make me happy? Nothing, if I can but be as thankful as I ought; and I trust that He, who has bestowed so many blessings on me, will give me gratitude to crown them all. I thank God for all the pleasing circumstances here, for my health of body, and perfect serenity of mind. To recollect the past, and compare it with the present, is all that I need to fill me with gratitude; and to be grateful is to be happy. I am far from thinking myself sufficiently grateful, or from indulging the hope that I shall ever be so in the present life. The warmest heart, perhaps, only feels by fits, and is often as insensible as the coldest. This, at least, is frequently the case with mine, and much oftener than it should be."

Among the families with whom Cowper was on terms of intimacy, there were none so entirely congenial to his taste as that of the Rev. Mr. Unwin. This worthy divine, who was now far advanced in years, had formerly been master of a free school in Huntingdon. On obtaining, however, from his college at Cambridge, the living of Grimston, he married Miss Cawthorne, the daughter of a very respectable draper in Ely, by whom he had two children, a son and a daughter. Disliking their residence at Grimston, they removed to Huntingdon, where they had now resided for many years.

Cowper became acquainted with this interesting family, which was afterwards, almost to the close of his life, a source of comfort to him, in the following rather singular manner. The Unwins frequently noticed Mr. C. and remarked the degree of piety and intelligence he seemed to possess; this induced them to wish for farther acquaintance with the interesting stranger: his manners, however, were so reserved, that an introduction to him seemed wholly out of their reach. After waiting some time, with no apparent prospect of success, their eldest son, Mr. W. Unwin, though dissuaded from it by his mother, lest it should be thought too intrusive, ventured to speak to Mr. Cowper one day, when they were coming out of church, after morning prayers, and to engage himself to take tea with Mr. C. that afternoon. This was perfectly agreeable to Cowper, who, in one of his letters some time afterwards, thus describes his new-made acquaintance:—"To my inexpressible joy, I found him one, whose notions of religion were spiritual and lively; one, whom the Lord had been training up from his infancy for the temple. We opened our hearts to each other at the first interview; and when we parted, I immediately retired to my chamber, and prayed the Lord, who had been the author, to be the guardian of our friendship, and to grant to it fervency and perpetuity, even unto death; and I doubt not that my gracious Father heard this prayer." A friendship thus formed was not likely to be soon interrupted; accordingly it continued with unabated affection through life, and became to both parties a source of much real enjoyment. Well would it be for Christians, were they, in making choice of their friends, to follow the example of Cowper! Entering upon it by earnest prayer to God for his blessing, they might then hope to derive all those invaluable benefits from it, which it is adapted and designed to convey.

The following Sabbath Cowper dined with the Unwins, and was treated with so much cordiality and real affection, that he ever after felt the warmest attachment to this interesting family. In his letters on the subject he thus writes: "The last acquaintance I have made here is of the race of the Unwins, consisting of father and mother, son and daughter; they are the most agreeable people imaginable; quite sociable, and as free from the cere-

monious civility of country gentlefolks as I ever met with. They treat me more like a near relation than a stranger, and their house is always open to me. The old gentleman carries me to Cambridge in his chaise; he is a man of learning and good sense, and as simple as parson Adams. His wife has a very uncommon understanding, has read much to excellent purpose, and is more polite than a dutchess; she treats me with an affection so truly Christian, that I could almost fancy my own mother restored to life again, to compensate me for all my lost friends and broken connections. She has a son, in all respects, worthy of such a mother, the most amiable young man I ever knew; he is not yet arrived at that time of life when suspicion recommends itself to us in the form of wisdom, and sets every thing but our own dear selves at an immeasurable distance from our esteem and confidence. Consequently he is known almost as soon as seen, and having nothing in his heart that makes it necessary for him to keep it barred and bolted, opens it to the perusal even of a stranger. His natural and acquired endowments are very considerable, and as to his virtues, I need only say that he is a Christian. Miss Unwin resembles her mother in her great piety, who is one of the most remarkable instances of it I ever knew. They are altogether the most cheerful and engaging family it is possible to conceive. They see but little company, which suits me exactly; go when I will, I find a house full of peace and cordiality in all its parts, and am sure to hear no scandal, but such discourse instead of it as we are all the better for. Now I know them, I wonder that I liked Huntingdon so well before, and am apt to think I should find every place disagreeable that had not an Unwin belonging to it."

CHAPTER V.

Cowper becomes an inmate of Mr. Unwin's family. Is much delighted with their society. Describes the manner in which they spent their time. His opinion respecting the knowledge which Christians will have of each other in Heaven. What will engage their thoughts there. Just views of Christian friendship. Strength of his religious affections. Humbling views of himself. Melancholy Death of Mr. Unwin. Cowper's reflections upon it. Mr. Newton's unexpected but providential visit to Mrs. Unwin. Cowper's determination to remain with the family. Their removal from Huntingdon to Olney.

Towards the end of October, 1765, Cowper began to fear that his solitary and lonely situation would not be agreeable to him during the winter; and finding his present method of living, though he was strictly economical, rather too expensive for his limited income, he judged it expedient to look out for a family, with which he might become an inmate, where he might enjoy the advantage of social and familiar intercourse, and be subject to a less expensive establishment. It providentially occurred to him, that he might probably be admitted, on such terms, into Mr. Unwin's family. He knew that a young gentleman, who had lived with them as a pupil, had just left them for Cambridge, and it appeared not improbable, that he might be allowed to succeed him, not as a pupil, but as an inmate. This subject occasioned him a tumult of anxious solicitude, and for some days he could not possibly divert his attention from it. He at length made it the subject of earnest prayer to his Heavenly Father, that he would be pleased to bring this affair to such an issue, as would be most calculated to promote His own glory; and he had the satisfaction, in a short time, to receive a gracious answer to his petitions. A few days afterwards he mentioned the subject to Mrs. Unwin, a satisfactory arrangement was very speedily made with the family, and he entered upon his new abode the eleventh of November 1765.

The manner in which he spent his time while associated with this exemplary family, and the high degree of enjoyment he there experienced, will be seen by the following extracts from his correspondence with his two amiable cousins, Lady Hesketh and Mrs. Cowper. To the former he thus writes:

"My dear Cousin—The frequency of your letters to me, while I lived alone, was occasioned, I am sure, by your regard for my welfare, and was an act of particular charity. I bless God, however, that I was happy, even then; solitude has nothing gloomy in it, if the soul points upwards. St. Paul tells his Hebrew converts, 'Ye are come,' (already come) 'to Mount Sion, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly of the first born, which are written in heaven, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant.' When this is the case, as surely as it was with them, or the Spirit of truth would never have spoken it, there is an end to the melancholy and dulness of life at once. You will not suspect me, my dear cousin, of a design to understand this passage literally; but this, however, it certainly means, that a lively faith is able to anticipate, in some measure, the joys of that heavenly society which the soul shall actually possess hereafter.

"Since I have changed my situation, I have found still greater cause of thanksgiving to the Father of all mercies. The family with whom I live are Christians, and it has pleased the Almighty to bring me to the knowledge of them, that I may want no means of improvement in that temper and conduct which he requires of all his servants. My dear cousin! one half of the Christian world would call this madness, fanaticism, and folly; but are not these things warranted by the word of God. If we have no communion with God here, surely we can expect none hereafter. A faith that does not place our conversation in heaven; that does not warm the heart and purify it too; that does not in short, govern our thoughts, words and deeds, is not Christian faith, nor can we procure by it any spiritual blessing, here or hereafter. Let us therefore see that we do not deceive ourselves in a matter of such infinite moment. The world will be ever telling us that we are good enough, and the world will vilify us behind our backs: but it is not the world which tries the heart—that is the prerogative of God alone. My dear cousin! I have often prayed for you behind your back, and now I pray for you to your face. There are many who would not forgive me this wrong, but I have known you so long, and so well, that I am not afraid of telling you how sincerely I wish for your growth in every Christian grace, in every thing that may promote and secure your everlasting welfare."

To his cousin, Mrs. Cowper, he thus writes:—"I am obliged to you for the interest you take in my welfare, and for your inquiring so particularly after the manner in which my time passes here. As to amusements—I mean what the world calls such—we have none; the place, indeed, swarms with them, and cards and dancing are the professed business of almost all the *gentle* inhabitants of Huntingdon. We refuse to take part in them, or to be accessories to this way of murdering our time, and by so doing have acquired the name of Methodists. Having told you how we do not spend our time, I will next say how we do. We breakfast commonly between eight and nine; till eleven, we read either the Scripture or the sermons of some faithful preacher; at eleven, we attend divine service, which is performed here every day; and from twelve to three, we separate and amuse ourselves as we please. During that interval, I read in my own apartment, or walk, or ride, or work in the garden. We seldom sit an hour after dinner, but, if the weather permits, adjourn into the garden, where, with Mrs. U. and her

son, I have generally the pleasure of religious conversation till tea-time. If it rains, or is too windy for walking, we either converse within doors, or sing some hymns of Martin's collection, and by the help of Mrs. Unwin's harpsichord, make up a tolerable concert, in which our hearts are the best and the most musical performers. After tea, we sally forth to take a walk in good earnest, and we have generally travelled four miles before we see home again. At night we read and converse till supper, and commonly finish the evening either with hymns, or with a sermon; and last of all, the family are called to prayers. I need not tell you that such a life as this is consistent with the utmost cheerfulness; accordingly, we are all happy, and dwell together in unity as brethren. Mrs. Unwin has almost a maternal affection for me, and I have something very like a filial one for her, and her son and I are brothers. Blessed be the God of our salvation for such companions, and for such a life; above all, for a heart to relish it."

It was during his residence with this family, while they resided at Huntingdon, that he wrote some of those excellent letters to Mrs. Cowper, with extracts from which it is our intention to enrich this part of his memoirs. Speaking of the knowledge which Christians will have of each other hereafter, he remarks:—"Reason is able to form many plausible conjectures concerning the possibility of our knowing each other in a future state; and the Scripture has, here and there, favored us with an expression that looks at least like a slight intimation of it; but because a conjecture can never amount to a proof, and a slight intimation cannot be construed into a positive assertion, therefore I think we can never come to any absolute conclusion upon the subject. We may, indeed, reason about the plausibility of our conjectures, and we may discuss, with great industry and shrewdness of argument, those passages in the Scripture which seem to favor this opinion; but still no certain means having been afforded us, no certain end can be attained; and after all that can be said, it will still be doubtful whether we shall know each other or not. Both reason and Scripture, however, furnish us with a great number of arguments on the affirmative side. In the parable of Dives and Lazarus, Dives is represented as knowing Lazarus, and Abraham as knowing them both, and the discourse between them is entirely concerning their respective characters and circumstances upon earth. Here, therefore, our Saviour seems to countenance the notion of a mutual knowledge and recollection; and if a soul that has perished shall know a soul that is saved, surely the heirs of salvation shall know and recollect each other.

"Paul, in the first epistle to the Thessalonians, encourages the faithful and laborious minister of Christ to expect that a knowledge of those who had been converted by their instrumentality would contribute greatly to augment their felicity in a future state, when each minister should appear before the throne of God, saying, 'Here am I, with the children thou hast given me.' This seems to imply, that the apostle should know the converts, and the converts the apostle, at least at the day of judgment, and if then, why not afterwards?"

In another letter, the following excellent remarks occur respecting what will engage our thoughts and form part of our communications in heaven:—"The common and ordinary occurrences of life, no doubt, and even the ties of kindred, and of all temporal interests, will be entirely discarded from that happy society, and possibly even the remembrance of them done away; but it does not therefore follow that our spiritual concerns, even in this life, will be forgotten, neither do I think that they can ever appear trifling to us, in any the most distant period of eternity. God will then be all in all; our whole nature, the soul, and all its faculties, will be employed in praising and adoring him; and if so, will it not furnish us with a theme of thanksgiving, to recollect 'The rock whence we were hewn, and the hole of the pit whence we were digged?'—To recollect the time when our faith, which, under the tuition and nurture of the Holy Spirit, has produced such a plentiful harvest of immortal bliss, was as a grain of mustard-seed, small in itself, promising but little fruit, and producing less?—to recollect the various attempts that were made upon it by the world, the flesh, and the devil, and its various triumphs over all, by the assistance of God, through our Lord Jesus Christ? At present, whatever our convictions may be of the sinfulness and corruptions of our nature, we can make but a very imperfect estimate either of our weakness or our guilt. Then, no doubt, we shall understand the full value of the wonderful salvation wrought out for us by our exalted Redeemer; and it seems reasonable to suppose, that in order to form a just idea of our redemption, we shall be able to form a just one of the danger we have escaped; when we know how weak and frail we were, we shall be more able to render due praise and honor to his strength who fought for us; when we know completely the hatefulness of sin in the sight of God, and how deeply we were tainted with it, we shall know how to value the blood by which we were cleansed, as we ought."

In the following letter to the same lady, he says: "I am not sorry that what I have said concerning our knowledge of each other, in a future state, has a little inclined you to the affirmative. For though the redeemed of the Lord will be sure of being happy in that state, as infinite power, employed by infinite goodness, can make them, and therefore, it may seem immaterial whether we shall or shall not recollect each other hereafter; yet, our present happiness, at least, is a little interested in the question. A parent, a friend, a wife, must needs, I think, feel a little heart-ache at the thought of an eternal separation from the objects of their regard: and not to know them when they meet them in another state, or never to meet them at all, amounts, though not altogether, yet nearly to the same thing. Remember and recognize them, I have no doubt we shall; and to believe that they are happy will, indeed, be no small addition to our own felicity; but to *see* them so, will surely be a greater. Thus, at least, it appears to our present human apprehension; consequently, therefore, to think that when we leave them we lose them for ever, and must remain eternally ignorant whether those, who were flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bone, partake with us of celestial glory, or are disinherited of their heavenly portion, must shed a dismal gloom over all our present connections. For my own part, this life is such a momentary thing, and all its interests have so shrunk in my estimation, since, by the grace of our Lord Jesus, I became attentive to the things of another, that, like a worm in the bud of all my friendships and affections, this very thought would eat out the heart of them all, had I a thousand; and were their date to terminate in this life, I think I should have no inclination to cultivate and improve such a fugitive business. Yet friendship is necessary to our happiness here, and built upon Christian principles, upon which only it can stand, is a thing even of religious sanction—for what is that love, which the Holy Spirit, speaking by St. John, so much inculcates, but friendship? The only love which deserves the name, is a love which can enable the Christian to toil, and watch, and deny himself, and risk even exposure to death, for his brother. Worldly friendships are a poor weed compared with this;

and even this union of the spirit in the bond of peace, would suffer, in my mind at least, could I think it were only coeval with our earthly mansions. It may possibly argue great weakness in me, in this instance, to stand so much in need of future hopes, to support me in the discharge of present duty: but so it is. I am far, I know, very far, from being perfect in Christian love, or any other divine attainment, and am, therefore, unwilling to forego whatever may help me on my progress."

The anxiety of his mind respecting religion, and the progress he had made, and was still making in it, will appear from the following extract:—"You are so kind as to inquire after my health, for which reason I must tell you what otherwise would not be worth mentioning, that I have lately been just enough indisposed to convince me, that not only human life in general, but mine in particular, hangs by a slender thread. I am stout enough in appearance, yet a little illness demolishes me. I have had a serious shake, and the building is not so firm as it was. But I bless God for it, with all my heart. If the inner man be but strengthened day by day, as I hope, under the renewing influences of the Holy Spirit, it will be, no matter how soon the outward is dissolved. He who has, in a manner, raised me from the dead, in a literal sense, has given me the grace, I trust, to be ready, at the shortest notice, to surrender up to him that life which I have twice received from him. Whether I live or die, I desire it may be to his glory, and then it must be to my happiness. I thank God, that I have those amongst my kindred, to whom I can write, without reserve, my sentiments on this subject. A letter upon any other subject is more insipid to me than ever my task was, when a school-boy. I say not this in vain-glory, God forbid! but to show what the Almighty, whose name I am unworthy to mention, has done for me, the chief of sinners. Once he was a terror to me; and his service, oh, what a weariness it was! Now I can say I love him and his holy name, and am never so happy as when I speak of his mercies to me."

To the same correspondent he again writes. "To find those whom I love, clearly and strongly persuaded of evangelical truth, gives me a pleasure superior to any this world can afford. Judge, then, whether your letter, in which the body and substance of saving faith is so evidently set forth, could meet with a lukewarm reception at my hands, or be entertained with indifference! Do not imagine that I shall ever hear from you upon this delightful theme, without real joy, or without prayer to God to prosper you in the way of his truth. The book you mention, lies now upon my table; Marshall is an old acquaintance of mine; I have both read him, and heard him read, with pleasure and edification. The doctrines he maintains are, under the influence of the spirit of Christ, the very life of my soul, and the soul of all my happiness. That Jesus is a *present* Saviour from the guilt of sin, by his most precious blood, and from the power of it by his Spirit; that, corrupt and wretched in ourselves, in Him, and in Him *only*, we are complete; that being united to Jesus by a lively faith, we have a solid and eternal interest in his obedience and sufferings, to justify us before the face of our Heavenly Father; and that all this inestimable treasure, the earnest of which is in grace, and its consummation in glory, is given, freely *given* to us by God; in short, that he hath freely opened the kingdom of heaven *to all believers;* are truths which cannot be disproved, though they have been disputed. These are the truths, which, by the grace of God, shall ever be dearer to me than life itself; shall ever be placed next my heart, as the throne, whereon the Saviour himself shall sit, to sway all its motions, and reduce that world of iniquity and rebellion to a state of filial and affectionate obedience to the will of the most Holy.

"These, my dear cousin, are the truths to which, by nature, we are enemies; they debase the sinner, and exalt the Saviour, to a degree, which the pride of our hearts, while unsubdued by grace, is determined never to allow. May the Almighty reveal his Son in our hearts, continually more and more, and teach us ever to increase in love towards him for having given us the unspeakable riches of Christ."

In the following letter to the same lady, he again writes:—"I think Marshall one of the best writers, and the most spiritual expositors of the Scripture, I ever read. I admire the strength of his argument, and the clearness of his reasonings, upon those points of our most holy religion which are generally least understood (even by real Christians) as master-pieces of the kind. His section upon the union of the soul with Christ is an instance of what I mean; in which he has spoken of a most mysterious truth, with admirable perspicuity, and with great good sense, making it all the while subservient to his main purport, of proving holiness to be the fruit and effect of faith. I never met with an author who understood the plan of salvation better, or was more happy in explaining it."

That Cowper inspected very closely, and watched very narrowly his own heart, will appear by the following extract from a letter to the same lady:—"Oh pride! pride! it deceives with the subtlety of a serpent, and seems to walk erect, though it crawls upon the earth. How will it twist and twine itself about to get from under the cross, which it is the glory of our Christian calling to be able to bear with patience and good will. Those who can guess at the heart of a stranger, and you especially, who are of a compassionate temper, will be more ready to excuse me than I can be to excuse myself. But, in good truth, I am too frequently guilty of the abominable vice. How should such a creature be admitted into those pure and sinless mansions where nothing shall enter that defileth; did not the blood of Christ, applied by faith, take away the guilt of sin, and leave no spot or stain behind it! O what continual need have I of an almighty, all-sufficient Saviour! I am glad you are acquainted so *particularly* with all the circumstances of my story, for I know that your secrecy and discretion may be trusted with any thing. A thread of mercy ran through all the intricate maze of those afflictive providences, so mysterious to myself at the time, and which must ever remain so to all who will not see what was the great design of them; at the judgment-seat of Christ the whole shall be laid open. How is the rod of iron changed into a sceptre of love!

"I have so much cause for humility, and so much need of it too, and every little sneaking resentment is such an enemy to it, that I hope I shall never give quarter to any thing that appears in the shape of sullenness or self-consequence hereafter. Alas! if my best friend, who laid down his life for me, were to remember all the instances in which I have neglected him, and to plead them against me in judgment, where should I hide my guilty head in the day of recompense? I will pray therefore for blessings upon my friends though they cease to be so, and upon my enemies, though they continue such."

Cowper had now been an inmate with the Unwin family a little more than eighteen months; and the above extracts, taken from his confidential letters, describe the happy frame of his mind, and the great progress he had made in divine knowledge, during this period. Living in the enjoyment of the divine presence himself, and associated with those who

experienced the same invaluable privilege, he tranquilly pursued the even tenor of his Christian course with undiverted attention, and with holy zeal; nor did there appear the slightest reason to suppose that any alteration was likely to take place in his circumstances, or in the circumstances of the family. He might fairly have calculated upon the uninterrupted continuance, for many years, of the same distinguished privileges; but the dispensations of Divine Providence are sometimes awfully mysterious. Events unforeseen, and unexpected, are often occurring, which give a bias to our affairs quite different to any that we had ever conceived. Such was the melancholy occurrence which happened in this family, about this time, and which, at no distant period, led to Cowper's removal from Huntingdon.

Mr. Unwin, proceeding to his church, one Sunday morning in July, 1767, was flung from his horse, and received a dreadful fracture on the back part of his skull, under which he languished till the following Thursday, and then died. Cowper, in relating this melancholy event to his cousin, remarks: —"This awful dispensation has left an impression upon our spirits which will not presently be worn off. May it be a lesson to us to watch, since we know not the day, nor the hour, when our Lord cometh! At nine o'clock last Sunday morning, Mr. Unwin was in perfect health, and as likely to live twenty years as either of us, and by the following Thursday he was a corpse. The few short intervals of sense that were indulged him, he spent in earnest prayer, and in expressions of a firm trust and confidence in the only Saviour. To that stronghold we must resort at last, if we would have hope in death; when every other refuge fails, we are glad to fly to the only shelter to which we can repair to any purpose; and happy is it for us, when the false ground we have chosen for ourselves, breaks under us, and we find ourselves obliged to have recourse to that Rock which can never be shaken: when this is our lot, we receive great and undeserved mercy.

"The effect of this very distressing event will only be a change of my abode; for I shall still, by God's leave, continue with Mrs. Unwin, whose behavior to me has always been that of a mother to a son. We know not yet where we shall settle, but we trust that the Lord, whom we seek, will go before us, and prepare a rest for us. We have employed our friends, Mr. Hawes, Dr. Conyers, and Mr. Newton, to look out a place for us, but at present are entirely ignorant under which of the three we shall settle, or whether under any one of them."

Just after this melancholy event had occurred, and while the family were in the midst of their distress, Mr. Newton, then curate of Olney, while on his way home from Cambridge, providentially called upon Mrs. Unwin. The late Dr. Conyers had learned from Mr. Unwin's son, the change that had taken place in her mind, on the subject of religion; and he accordingly requested Mr. Newton to embrace the earliest opportunity of having some conversation with her on the subject. His visits could not possibly have been made at a more seasonable juncture. Mrs. Unwin was now almost overwhelmed with sorrow; and though the strength of her Christian principles preserved her from losing that confidence in the Almighty, which can alone support the mind under such distressing circumstances, yet, both she and Mr. Cowper stood in need of some judicious Christian friend, to administer to them the consolations of the gospel. Their Heavenly Father could not have sent them one more capable of binding up their wounds, and soothing their sorrow, than Mr. Newton. He knew when instrumentally, to pour the oil of consolation into their wounded spirits; and his providential visit proved as useful as it was seasonable. He invited them to fix their future abode at Olney, whither they repaired, in the following October, to a house he had provided for them, so near the vicarage in which he lived, that by opening a door in the garden wall, they could exchange mutual visits, without entering the street. Mrs. Unwin kept the house, and Cowper continued to board with her, as he had done during her husband's life.

CHAPTER VI.

Commencement of Cowper's intimacy with Mr. Newton. Pleasure it afforded him. His charitable disposition. Means provided for its indulgence, by the munificence of the late J. Thornton, Esq. Mr. Thornton's death. Cowper's poetic tribute to his memory. Remarks on the insufficiency of earthly objects to afford peace to the mind. His great anxiety for the spiritual welfare of his correspondents. Consolatory remarks addressed to his cousin. Severe affliction of his brother. Cowper's great concern on his behalf. Happy change that takes place in his brother's sentiments on religious subjects. His death. Cowper's reflections on it. Deep impression it made upon his mind. Description of his brother's character. Engages with Mr. Newton to write the Olney Hymns. Cowper's severe indisposition.

GREAT as were the advantages enjoyed by Cowper, while inmated with the Unwin family at Huntingdon, they were not to be compared with those which he experienced in his new situation at Olney. He spent his time nearly in the same manner as at Huntingdon, having the additional advantage of frequent religious intercourse with his friend, Mr. Newton, with whom he was upon terms of the closest intimacy. The amiable manners, and exemplary piety of Cowper, greatly endeared him to all with whom he was acquainted. He gladly availed himself of the benefits of religious conversation with the pious persons in Mr. Newton's congregation, and was particularly attentive to those among them, who were in circumstances of poverty. He regularly visited the sick, and, to the utmost extent of his power, afforded them relief. He attended the social meetings for prayer established by Mr. Newton; and at such seasons, when he was occasionally required to conduct the service, agitated as were his feelings before he commenced, he no sooner began, than he poured forth his heart unto God in earnest intercession, with a devotion equally simple, sublime, and fervent, affording to all who were present on these occasions proofs of the unusual combination of elevated genius, exquisite sensibility, and profound piety, by which he was pre-eminently distinguished. His conduct in private was consistent with the solemnity and fervor of these social devotional engagements. Three times a day he prayed, and gave thanks unto God, in retirement, besides the regular practice of domestic worship. His familiar acquaintance with, and experimental knowledge of the gospel, relieved him from all terror and anxiety of mind; his soul was stayed upon God; the divine promise and faithfulness were his support; and he lived in the enjoyment of perfect peace.

His hymns, most of which were composed at this period, prove that he was no stranger to those corrupt dispositions, which the best of men have to bewail, and which have so strong a tendency to draw away the mind from God. Against these dispositions, however, he was constantly upon the watch, and by the cultivation of devotional habits, with the gracious aid of the Divine Spirit, he suppressed every irregular desire, restrained every corrupt inclination, and ultimately came off successful in his spiritual warfare.

The first few years of his residence at Olney, may, perhaps, be regarded as the happiest of his

life. Associated intimately with his beloved friend, Mr. Newton, and availing himself of his valuable assistance, in his efforts to acquire divine knowledge, his heart became established in the truth, and he experienced that degree of confidence in God, which alone can insure peace of mind, and real tranquillity. Aware of the pleasure which he took in visiting the poor in his neighborhood, and contributing to their relief, Mr. Newton procured for him, a liberal annual allowance of cash, for the purpose of distribution, from the late excellent John Thornton, Esq. It is almost needless to add, that becoming the almoner of this distinguished philanthropist, was to Cowper a source of the greatest enjoyment. No individual was ever more alive to the cry of distress; he seemed, indeed, to possess almost an excess of this amiable sensibility. Nothing gladdened his heart more than to be the means of drying up the widow's tears, and assuaging the orphan's grief; which the liberality of this great philanthropist allowed him often to accomplish. The decease of Mr. Thornton took place in 1790, and Cowper has immortalized his memory, by the following beautiful and sublime eulogy:—

"Thee, Thornton, worthy in some page to shine
As honest, and more eloquent than mine,
I mourn; or, since thrice happy thou must be,
The world, no longer thy abode, not thee:
Thee to deplore were grief misspent indeed;
It were to weep that goodness has its meed
That there is bliss prepared in yonder sky,
And glory for the virtuous when they die.
What pleasure can the miser's fondled hoard,
Or spendthrift's prodigal excess afford,
Sweet as the privilege of healing wo,
Suffered by virtue, combating below?
That privilege was thine; Heaven gave thee means,
To illumine with delight the saddest scenes,
Till thy appearance chased the gloom, forlorn
As midnight, and despairing of a morn.
Thou hadst an industry in doing good,
Restless as his who toils and sweats for food;
Avarice in thee was the desire of wealth,
By rust unperishable, or by stealth;
And if the genuine worth of gold depend
On application to its noblest end,
Thine had a value in the scales of Heaven,
Surpassing all that mine or mint has given;
And though God made thee of a nature prone
To distribution, boundless, of thy own,
And still, by motives of religious force,
Impelled thee more to that heroic course,
Yet was thy liberality discreet,
Nice in its choice, and of a temperate heat;
And, though an act unwearied, *secret* still
As, in some solitude, the summer rill
Refreshes, where it winds, the faded green,
And cheers the drooping flowers, unheard, unseen.
Such was thy charity; no sudden start,
After long sleep, of passion in the heart;
But steadfast principle, and in its kind
Of close alliance with the eternal mind,
Traced easily to its true source above,
To Him whose works bespeak his nature, love.
Thy bounties all were Christian, and I make
This record of thee for the gospel's sake,
That the incredulous themselves may see
Its use and power exemplified in thee."

Owing to some cause, for which we are unable to account, Cowper's correspondence with his friends became much less frequent after his settlement at Olney, than it had been formerly: probably it might be attributed, in some degree at least, to his close intimacy with Mr. Newton, for they were seldom seven waking hours apart from each other. The same vein of genuine and unaffected piety, however, runs through those letters which he did write, and they abound with remarks of uncommon excellence. To his cousin, Mrs. Cowper, he thus expresses his feelings:—"You live in the centre of a world, I know you do not delight in. Happy are you, my dear friend, in being able to discern the insufficiency of all it can afford, to fill and satisfy the desires of an immortal soul! That God, who created us for the enjoyment of himself, has determined in mercy that it shall fail us here, in order that the blessed result of all our inquiries after happiness in the creature, may be a warm pursuit, and a close attachment to our true interests, in fellowship with him, through the mediation of our dear Redeemer. I bless his goodness, and his grace, that I have any reason to hope I am a partaker with you in the desire after better things, than are to be found in a world polluted by sin, and, therefore, devoted to destruction. May he enable us both to consider our present life in its only true light, as an opportunity put into our hands to glorify him amongst men, by a conduct suited to his word and will! I am miserably defective in this holy and blessed art, but I hope there is, at the bottom of all my sinful infirmities, a desire to live just so long as I may be enabled to answer, in some measure, at least, the end of my existence, in this respect; and then to obey the summons, and attend him in a world, where they who are his servants here, shall pay him an unsinful obedience for ever."

The lively interest which Cowper took, in the spiritual welfare of his correspondents, will appear in the following letter to his esteemed friend, Joseph Hill, Esq., dated 21st January, 1769:—"Dear Joe: I rejoice with you in your recovery, and that you have escaped from the hands of one, from whose hands you will not always escape. Death is either the most formidable, or most comfortable thing, we have in prospect, on this side of eternity. To be brought near to him, and to discern neither of these features in his face, would argue a degree of insensibility, of which I will not suspect my friend, whom I know to be a thinking man. You have been brought down to the sides of the grave, and you have been raised up again, by him who has the keys of the invisible world; who opens, and none can shut, who shuts and none can open. I do not forget to return thanks to him on your behalf, and to pray that your life, which he has spared, may be devoted to his service. 'Behold! I stand at the door, and knock,' is the word of him, on whom both our mortal and immortal life depend, and blessed be his name! it is the word of one who wounds only that he may heal, and who waits to be gracious. The language of every such dispensation is, 'Prepare to meet thy God.' It speaks with the voice of mercy and goodness; for, without such notices, whatever preparation we might make for other events, we should make none for this. My dear friend, I desire and pray, that when this last enemy shall come to execute an *unlimited* commission on us, we may be found ready, being established and rooted in a well-grounded faith in his name who conquered death, and triumphed over him on the cross. If I am ever enabled to look forward to death with comfort, which I thank God is sometimes the case, I do not take my view of it from the top of my own works and deservings, though God is witness, that the labor of my life is to keep a conscience void of offence towards him. Death is always formidable to me, but when I see him disarmed of his sting by having it sheathed in the body of Christ Jesus."

To the same friend, on another occasion, he thus writes:—"I take a friend's share in all your concerns, so far as they come to my knowledge, and consequently did not receive the news of your

marriage with indifference. I wish you and your bride all the happiness that belongs to the state; and the still greater felicity of that state which marriage is only a type of. All those connections shall be dissolved; but there is an indissoluble bond between Christ and his church, the subject of derision to an unthinking world, but the glory and happiness of all his people."

No one knew better how to administer consolation to those who were in distress, and certainly no one ever took a greater delight in doing it than Cowper. To his amiable cousin, Mrs. Cowper, who had been called to sustain a severe domestic affliction, he writes as follows:—"A letter from your brother, brought me yesterday the most afflicting intelligence that has reached me these many years; I pray God to comfort you, and to enable you to sustain this heavy stroke with that resignation to his will, which none but himself can give, and which he gives to none but his own children. How blessed and happy is your lot, my dear friend, beyond the lot of the greater part of mankind: that you know what it is to draw near to God in prayer, and are acquainted with a throne of grace! You have resources in the infinite love of a dear Redeemer, which are withheld from millions: and the promises of God, which are yea and amen in Christ Jesus, are sufficient to answer all your necessities, and to sweeten the bitterest cup which our Heavenly Father will ever put into your hand. May he now give you liberty to drink at these wells of salvation till you are filled with consolation and peace, in the midst of trouble. He has said, When thou passeth through the fire, I will be with thee, and when through the floods, they shall not overflow thee. You have need of such a word as this, and he knows your need of it; and the time of necessity is the time when he will be sure to appear in behalf of those who trust in him. I bear you and yours upon my heart before him, night and day. For I never expect to hear of distress, which shall call upon me with a louder voice to pray for the sufferer. I know the Lord hears me for myself, vile and sinful as I am, and believe, and am sure, that he will hear me for you also. He is the friend of the widow, and the father of the fatherless, even God in his holy habitation; in all our afflictions, he is afflicted; and when he chastens us, it is in mercy. Surely he will sanctify this dispensation to you, do you great and everlasting good by it, make the world appear like dust and vanity in your sight, as it truly is, and open to your view the glories of a better country, where there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor pain, but God shall wipe away all tears from your eyes for ever. O that comfortable word! 'I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction;' so that our very sorrows are evidences of our calling, and he chastens us because we are his children. My dear cousin, I commit you to the word of his grace, and to the comforts of his Holy Spirit. Your life is needful for your family; may God, in mercy to them, prolong it, and may he preserve you from the dangerous effects which a stroke like this might have upon a frame so tender as yours. I grieve for you, I pray for you; could I do more I would, but God must comfort you."

Cowper had scarcely forwarded this consolatory and truly Christian letter, when he was himself visited with a trial so severe as to call into exercise all that confidence in the Almighty which he had endeavored to excite in the mind of his amiable relative. He received a letter from his brother, then residing as a Fellow in Bene't. College, Cambridge, between whom and himself there had always existed an affection truly fraternal, stating that he was seriously indisposed. No brothers were ever more warmly interested in each other's welfare. At the commencement of Cowper's affliction, which led to his removal to St. Alban's, his brother had watched over him with the tenderest solicitude; and it was doubtless owing, in a great degree, to this tenderness, that Cowper was placed under the care of Dr. Cotton. While he remained at St. Alban's, his brother visited him, and, as has been related above, became the means of contributing materially to his recovery. On Cowper's removal to Huntingdon, these affectionate brothers adopted a plan for a frequent and regular interchange of visits, so that they were seldom many days without seeing each other, though the distance between their places of abode was fifteen miles; and, even after Cowper's removal to Olney, his brother, during the first two years, paid him several visits; they seemed, indeed, mutually delighted with an opportunity of being in each other's company.

Cowper, on hearing of his brother's illness, immediately repaired to Cambridge. To his inexpressible grief he found him in a condition that left little or no hopes of his recovery. In a letter to Mrs. Cowper, he thus describes his case:—"My brother continues much as he was. His case is a very dangerous one—an imposthume of the liver, attended by an asthma and dropsy. The physician has little hopes of his recovery; indeed I might say none at all, only, being a friend, he does not formally give him over by ceasing to visit him, lest it should sink his spirits. For my own part, I have no expectation of it, except by a signal interposition of Providence in answer to prayer. His case is clearly out of the reach of medicine, but I have seen many a sickness healed, where the danger has been equally threatening, by the only Physician of value. I doubt not he will have an interest in your prayers, as he has in the prayers of many. May the Lord incline his ear, and give an answer of peace. I know it is good to be afflicted; I trust you have found it so, and that under the teaching of the Spirit of God, we shall both be purified. It is the desire of my soul to seek a better country, where God shall wipe away all tears from the eyes of his people, and where, looking back upon the ways by which he has led us, we shall be filled with everlasting wonder, love, and praise."

Finding his brother on the verge of the grave, Cowper discovered the greatest anxiety respecting his everlasting welfare. He knew that his sentiments on some of the most important truths of religion had been long unsettled; and fully aware that while such was the case, he could experience no solid enjoyment in the present life, whatever might be his condition in future, he labored diligently to give him those views of the gospel which he had himself found so singularly beneficial; nor did he labor in vain. He had the unspeakable gratification to witness the complete triumph of the truth, and its consolatory influence upon the mind of his beloved brother, in his dying moments. Writing to Mr. Hill, he says:—"It pleased God to cut short my brother's connections and expectations here, yet, not without giving him lively and glorious views of a better happiness, than any he could propose to himself in such a world as this. Notwithstanding his great learning, (for he was one of the chief men in the University in that respect,) he was candid and sincere in his inquiries after truth. Though he could not agree to my sentiments when I first acquainted him with them, nor in many conversations which I afterwards had with him upon the subject, could he be brought to acquiesce in them as scriptural and true, yet I had no sooner left St. Alban's, than he began to study with the deepest attention those points on which we differed, and to furnish himself with the best writers upon them. His mind was kept open to conviction for five years, during all which time he labored in this pursuit with un-

wearied diligence, whilst leisure and opportunity were afforded. Amongst his dying words were these:—'Brother, I thought you wrong, yet wanted to believe as you did. I found myself not able to believe, yet always thought I should be one day brought to do so.' From the study of books, he was brought, upon his death-bed, to the study of himself, and there learnt to renounce his righteousness, and his own most amiable character, and to submit himself to the righteousness which is of God by faith. With these views, he was desirous of death: satisfied of his interest in the blessing purchased by the blood of Christ, he prayed for death with earnestness, felt the approaches of it with joy, and died in peace."

It afforded Cowper inexpressible delight to witness, in his brother's case, the consoling and animating power of those principles, which he had himself found to be so highly beneficial. This had been the object of his most anxious solicitude, from the period that God was pleased to visit him with the consolations of his grace. From that time he took occasion to declare to his brother what God had done for his soul; and neglected no opportunity of attempting to engage him in conversation of a spiritual kind. On his first visit to him at Cambridge, after he left St. Alban's, his heart being then full of the subject, he poured it out to his brother without reserve, taking care to show him, that what he had received was not merely a new set of notions, but a real impression of the truths of the gospel. His brother listened to his statements at first with some attention, and often labored to convince him, that the difference in their sentiments was much less real than verbal. Subsequently, however, he became more reserved; and though he heard patiently, he never replied, nor ever discovered a desire to converse on the subject. At the commencement of his affliction, little as was the concern he then felt for his spiritual interests, the thoughts of God, and of eternity, would sometimes force themselves upon his mind; at every little prospect of recovery, however, he found it no difficult matter to thrust them out again. It was evident that his mind was very far from being set on things spiritual and heavenly, as on almost every subject but that of religion, he could converse fluently. At every suitable opportunity, Cowper endeavored to give a serious turn to the discourse, but without any apparent success. Having obtained his permission, he prayed with him frequently; still, however, he seemed as careless and unconcerned as ever.

On one occasion, after his brother had, with much difficulty, survived a severe paroxysm of his disorder, he observed to him as he sat by his bed-side, "that, though it had pleased God to visit him with great afflictions, yet mercy was mingled with the dispensation. You have many friends that love you, and are willing to do all they can to serve you, and so, perhaps have many others in the like circumstances; but it is not the lot of every sick man, how much soever he may be beloved, to have a friend that can pray for him." He replied, "That is true; and I hope God will have mercy upon me." His love to Cowper, from that time, became very remarkable; there was a tenderness in it more than was merely natural; and he generally expressed it by calling for blessings upon him in the most affectionate terms, and with a look and manner not to be described. One afternoon, a few days before he died, he suddenly burst into tears, and said, with a loud cry, "O forsake me not!" Cowper went to the bed-side, grasped his hand, and tenderly inquired why he wished him to remain. "O brother," said he, "I am full of what I could say to you; if I live, you and I shall be more like one another than we have been; but whether I live or not, all is well, and will be so; I know it will; I have felt that which I never felt before; and am sure that God has visited me with this sickness, to teach me what I was too proud to learn in health. I never had satisfaction till now, having no ground to rest my hopes upon; but now I have a foundation which nothing can shake. I have peace in myself; and if I live, I hope it will be that I might be a messenger of peace to others. I have learned that in a moment, which I could not have learned by reading many books for many years. The light I have received comes late, but not too late, and it is a comfort to me that I never made the gospel truths a subject of ridicule. This bed would be to me a bed of misery, and it is so; but it is likewise a bed of joy, and a bed of discipline. Was I to die this night, I know I should be happy. This assurance, I hope, is quite consistent with the word of God. It is built upon a sense of my own utter insufficiency, and all-sufficiency of Christ. There is but one key to the New-Testament; there is but one interpreter. I cannot describe to you, nor shall I ever be able to describe to you, what I felt when this was given to me. May I make good use of it! How I shudder when I think of the danger I have just escaped! How wonderful is it that God should look upon me! Yet he sees me, and takes notice of all that I suffer. I see him too, and can hear him say, "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you peace." He survived this change only a few days, and died happily, rejoicing in hope of the glory of God.

An event like this could not fail to make a deep impression upon the tender spirit of Cowper, and his feelings on the occasion were such as are not experienced by ordinary minds. The following letter to his amiable cousin shows clearly the state of his mind:—"You judge rightly of the manner in which I have been affected by the Lord's late dispensation towards my brother. I found it a cause of sorrow that I lost so near a relation, and one so deservedly dear to me, and that he left me just when our sentiments upon the most interesting subject became the same. But it was also a cause of joy, that it pleased God to give me a clear and evident proof that he had changed his heart, and adopted him into the number of his children. For this I hold myself peculiarly bound to thank him, because he might have done all that he was pleased to do for him, and yet have afforded him neither strength nor opportunity to declare it. He told me, that from the time he was first ordained, he began to be dissatisfied with his religious opinions, and to suspect that there were greater things revealed in the Bible, than were generally believed or allowed to be there. From the time when I first visited him, after my release from St. Alban's, he began to read upon the subject. It was at that time I informed him of the views of divine truth, which I had received in that school of affliction. He laid what I said to heart, and began to furnish himself with the best writers on the controverted points, whose works he read with great diligence and attention, carefully comparing them with the Scriptures. None ever truly and ingenuously sought the truth, but they found it. A spirit of earnest inquiry is the gift of God, who never says to any, Seek ye my face in vain. Accordingly, about ten days before his death, it pleased the Lord to dispel all his doubts, to reveal in his heart the knowledge of the Saviour, and to give him that firm and unshaken confidence in the ability and willingness of Christ to save sinners, which is invariably followed by a joy that is unspeakable and full of glory."

Of the character of his much beloved brother, whose death filled him with mingled emotions of joy and grief, Cowper has given the following inte-

resting description:—"He was a man of a most candid and ingenuous spirit; his temper remarkably sweet, and in his behavior to me he had always manifested an uncommon affection. His outward conduct, so far as it fell under my notice, or I could learn it by the report of others, was perfectly decent and unblameable. There was nothing vicious in any part of his practice, but being of a studious, thoughtful turn, he placed his chief delight in the acquisition of learning, and made such progress in it, that he had but few rivals. He was critically skilled in the Latin, Greek, and Hebrew languages; was beginning to make himself master of the Syriac, and perfectly understood the French and Italian, the latter of which he could speak fluently. Learned, however, as he was, he was easy and cheerful in his conversation, and entirely free from the stiffness which is generally contracted by men devoted to such pursuits."

"I had a brother once;
Peace to the memory of a man of worth!
A man of letters and of manners too!
Of manners, sweet, as virtue always wears,
When gay good humor dresses her in smiles!
He grac'd a college, in which order yet
Was sacred, and was honor'd, lov'd, and wept
By more than one, themselves conspicuous there."

Notwithstanding the cheerfulness with which Cowper bore up under this painful bereavement, when it first occurred, owing to the happy circumstances related above, with which it was attended, yet there is reason to believe that it made an impression upon his peculiarly sensitive mind, more deep than visible; and it was not soon to be effaced. It unquestionably diminished his attachment to the world, and made him less unwilling to leave it. Writing to his friend, Mr. Hill, at this time, he says:—"I have not done conversing with terrestrial objects, though I should be happy were I able to hold more continual converse with a friend above the skies. He has my heart, but he allows a corner of it for all who show me kindness, and therefore one for you. The storm of 1763, made a wreck of the friendships I had contracted in the course of many years, yours only excepted, which has survived the tempest."

It appears not improbable that his friend, Mr. Newton, might have witnessed, in the morbid tendency of his mind to melancholy, of which he then discovered symptoms, some traces of the deep and extensive wound which his mind had received by this event, though his efforts to conceal it were incessant. Hence, he wisely engaged him in a literary undertaking, congenial to his taste, suited to his admirable talents, and, perhaps, more adapted to alleviate his distress than any other that could have been selected. Mr. Newton had felt the want of a volume of evangelical hymns, on experimental subjects, suited for public and private worship; he mentioned the subject to Cowper, and pressed him to undertake it, and the result was, a friendly compact to supply the volume between them, with an understanding that Cowper was to be the principal composer. He entered upon this work with great pleasure; and though he does not appear, previous to this, to have employed his poetical talents for a considerable time, yet the admirable hymns he composed, show with what ease he could write upon the doctrinal, experimental, or practical parts of Christianity. One of our best living poets, whose writings more frequently remind us of Cowper's than any we have ever read, in an essay on the poet's productions, remarks:—"Of these hymns, it must suffice to say, that, like all his best compositions, they are principally communings with his own heart, or avowals of personal Christian experience. As such they are frequently applicable to every believer's feelings, and touch, unexpectedly, the most secret springs of joy and sorrow, faith, fear, hope, love, trial, despondency and triumph. Some allude to infirmities, the most difficult to be described, but often the source of excruciating anguish to the tender conscience. The 72d hymn, Book I. is written with the confidence of inspiration, and the authority of a prophet. The 96th hymn of the same book, is a perfect allegory in miniature, without a failing point, or confusion of metaphor, from beginning to end. Hymn 51, Book III. presents a transformation, which, if found in Ovid, might have been extolled as the happiest of his fictions. Hymn 12, Book II. closes with one of the hardiest figures to be met with out of the Hebrew Scriptures. None but a poet of the highest order could have written it; verses cannot go beyond it, and painting cannot approach it. Hymn 38, Book II. is a strain of most noble simplicity, expressive of confidence the most remote from presumption, and such as a heart at peace with God alone could enjoy and utter. Who can read the 55th hymn, Book II. without feeling as if he could, at that moment, forsake all, take up his cross, and follow his Saviour? The 19th hymn, Book III. is a model of tender pleading, of believing, persevering prayer in trouble; and the following one is a brief parody of Bunyan's finest passage, and is admirable of its kind. The reader might almost imagine himself Christian on his pilgrimage, the triumph and the trance are brought so home to his bosom. Hymn 15, of the same book, is a lyric, of high tone and character, and rendered awfully interesting, by the circumstances under which it was written—in the twilight of departing reason."*

The benevolent heart of Cowper was delighted in a high degree to co-operate with a man of Mr. Newton's talents and piety, in promoting the advancement of religion in his neighborhood. It is deeply to be regretted, that when he had only composed sixty-eight hymns, all of which were uncommonly excellent, and were afterwards published by Mr. Newton, in the Olney collection, he was laid aside from the interesting employment by serious indisposition. It pleased God, for reasons inscrutable to us, and which it would be impious to arraign, to visit the afflicted poet with a renewed attack of his former hypochondriacal complaint, more protracted, and not less violent, than the one he had before experienced. Just on the eve of the attack he commenced the following sublime hymn:—

"God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform:
He plants his footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm.

Deep in unfathomable mines
Of never-failing skill,
He treasures up his bright designs,
And works his sovereign will.

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take!
The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy, and shall break
In blessings on your head.

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust him for his grace;
Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face.

His purposes all ripen fast,
Unfolding every hour;

* Essay on Cowper's Productions, by James Montgomery.

The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flower.

Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And scan His work in vain;
God is his own interpreter,
And he will make it plain."

CHAPTER. VII.

Great severity of Cowper's mental depression. His presentiment of it. Its consequences. Remarks upon its probable cause. Absurdity of attributing it, in any degree, to religion. Mrs. Unwin's great attention to him. His aversion to the company of strangers. Symptoms of his recovery. Domesticates three leverets. Amusement they afford him. Mr. Newton's removal from Olney Introduction of Mr. Bull, to Cowper. His translation of Madame de la Guyon's poems, at Mr. Bull's request. Commences his original productions, at the suggestion of Mrs. Unwin. Renews his correspondence with Mr. and Mrs. Newton. Describes the state of his mind.

We are again arrived at another of those melancholy periods of Cowper's life, over which it must be alike the duty of the biographer, and the wish of the reader, to cast a veil. Mental aberration, whoever may be the subject of it, excites the tenderest commiseration of all; but if there be a time when it may be contemplated with emotions more truly distressing than another, it is when it attacks those who are endowed with talents the most brilliant, with dispositions the most amiable, and with piety the most ardent and unobtrusive. Such was eminently the case in the present instance. To see a mind like Cowper's enveloped in the thickest gloom of despondency, and for several years, in the prime of life, remaining in a state of complete inactivity and misery, must have been distressing in no ordinary degree.

A short time previous to the afflictive visitation, Cowper appears to have received some presentiment of its approach, and during a solitary walk in the fields, as was hinted above, he composed that beautiful hymn in the Olney collection with which we closed our last chapter. On this occasion, acute as may have been his feelings, he must have experienced an unshaken confidence in God; for it is scarcely possible to read this admirable production, however dark and distressing the dispensations of Divine Providence towards us may be, without enjoying the same delightful emotions. About the same time, he composed the hymn entitled "Temptation," the following lines from which will show how powerfully his mind was then exercised:

"The billows swell, the winds are high,
Clouds overcast my wintry sky;
Out of the depths to thee I call,
My fears are great, my strength is small.

O Lord, the pilot's part perform,
And guide and guard me through the storm;
Defend me from each threatening ill,
Control the waves, say 'Peace, be still.

Amidst the roaring of the sea,
My soul still hangs her hope on thee;
Thy constant love, thy faithful care,
Is all that saves me from despair."

He now relapsed into a state very much resembling that which had previously occasioned his removal to St. Alban's. This second attack occurred in 1773: he remained in the same painful and melancholy condition, without even a single alleviation of his sufferings, for the protracted period of five years; and it was five years more before he wholly recovered the use of his admirable powers. His mind, which covld formerly soar on the wings of faith and love, to the utmost limits of Christian knowledge and enjoyment, now sunk into the lowest depths of depression, and here seemed as if it would remain immovably fixed; rejecting, with deplorable firmness, every species of consolation that was attempted to be administered.

Various causes have been assigned, by different writers, for the melancholy aberration of mind of which Cowper was now, and at other seasons of his life, the subject; but none are so irreconcilable to every thing like just and legitimate reasoning, as the attempt to aseribe it to religion. That unjust views of the character of God, and of the nature of the gospel, may never have been the predisposing causes of great and severe mental depression, we are not disposed to deny, though we think this a case of very rare occurrence, and one in which the subject of it must be in a state of great ignorance respecting the fundamental truths of religion. Ought this, however, when it does happen, to be identified with religion, of which, at the best, it can only be regarded as a mere caricature? There was evidently, in the case of Cowper, nothing that bore the slightest resemblance to this. Making some allowances for expressions occasionally employed by him peculiar to the system which he had embraced, perhaps it will not be saying too much to affirm, that no individual ever entertained more scriptural views of the gospel dispensation in all its parts, and of the perfections and attributes of its great Author, than this excellent man. The letters he wrote to his correspondents, and the hymns he composed, prior to this second attack, prove unquestionably that his views of religion were at the remotest distance from what can be termed visionary or enthusiastic; on the contrary, they were perfectly scriptural and evangelical, and were, consequently, infinitely more adapted to support than to depress his mind.

The living poet whom we have before quoted, remarks:—"With regard to Cowper's malady, there scarcely needs any other proof that it was not occasioned by his religion than this, that the error on which he stumbled was in direct contradiction to his creed. He believed that he had been predestinated to life, yet under his delusion imagined that God, who cannot lie, repent, or change, had, in his sole instance, and in one moment, reversed his own decree, which had been in force from all eternity. At the same time, by a perversion of the purest principles of Christian obedience, he was so submissive to what he erroneously supposed was the will of God, that, to have saved himself from the very destruction which he dreaded, he would not avail himself of any of the means of grace, even presuming they might have been efficacious, because he believed they were forbidden to him. Yet, in spite of the self-evident impossibility of his faith affecting a sound mind with such a hallucination—though a mind previously diseased might as readily fall into that as the other; in spite of chronology, his first aberration having taken place before he had 'tasted the good word of God;' in spite of geography, that calamity having befallen him in London, where he had no acquaintance with persons holding the reprobated doctrines of election and sovereign grace; and in spite of fact, utterly undeniable, that the only effectual consolations which he experienced under his first or subsequent attacks of depression, arose from the truths of the gospel;—in spite of all these unanswerable confutations of the ignorant and malignant falsehood, the enemies of Christian truth persevere in repeating, 'that too much religion made poor Cowper mad.' If they be sincere, they are themselves under the strongest delusion; and it will be well if it prove not, on their part, a wilful one—it

will be well if they have not reached that last perversity of human reason, to believe a falsehood of their own invention."

The remarks of Mr. Hayley, in his admirable life of the poet, page 144, vol. 1, are, we think, liable to some objection. He says—"So fearfully and wonderfully are we made, that man in all conditions ought, perhaps, to pray that he never may be led to think of his Creator and of his Redeemer, either too little or too much, since human misery is often seen to arise equally, from an utter neglect of all spiritual concerns, and from a wild extravagance of devotion."

It is surely needless to observe, that the devotion of Cowper was as much unlike what could, with any degree of propriety, be termed wild or extravagant, as can well be imagined. To what description of devotion Mr. Hayley would apply these epithets we cannot tell, but surely not to that which is scripturally evangelical, which was eminently the character of Cowper's and which is of a nature so heavenly and spiritual, so perfectly adapted to the circumstances of mankind, and withal so soothing and consoling, that it can never be carried to excess. The more powerfully its influence is felt upon the mind, the more extensive must be the enjoyment it produces, unless when it pleases God, as in the case of Cowper, to disorganize the mental powers, and thereby unfit it for the reception of that comfort which it would otherwise experience.

Mental disorganization may undoubtedly arise from an almost infinite variety of causes, many of which, as in the poet's case, must for ever elude our search, though they are all under the control of that God, who is the giver of life and its preserver. Real religion, however, which consists in a cordial reception of the truth in the heart, can never produce it in the remotest degree; evangelical devotion cannot be too intense, nor can we know too much of our Creator and Redeemer. Contemplating the Divine Being apart from the gospel of Christ, or through the distorting medium of our own fancies, may possibly, in some cases, produce depression; viewing him as he is presented to our minds in the Scriptures, in all the plenitude of his goodness and benevolence, is sure to be productive of consequences directly opposite. Instead of there being any danger likely to arise from having our thoughts too much employed upon the character of God, we think a scripturally comprehensive view of his perfections the best possible preservative from despair. To represent an excess of devotion as the cause of Cowper's malady, in however slight a degree, is obviously opposed to every consistent view of religion, and is assigning that for its cause which was infinitely more likely to become its only effectual cure.

The melancholy condition to which Cowper was now reduced, afforded Mrs. Unwin an opportunity of proving the warmth of her affection for, and the sincerity of her attachment to, the dejected poet. He now required to be watched with the greatest care, vigilance, and perseverance; and it pleased God to endow her with all that tenderness, fortitude, and firmness of mind, which were requisite for the proper discharge of duties so important. Her incessant care over him, during the long fit of his depressive malady, could only be equalled by the pleasure she experienced on seeing his pure and powerful mind gradually emerge from that awful state of darkness in which it had been enveloped, into the clear sunshine of liberty and peace: she hailed his approach to convalescence, slowly as it advanced, with the mingled emotions of gratitude and praise.

Cowper, throughout the whole of this severe attack, was inaccessible to all, except his friend Mr. Newton who, during the whole of its continuance, watched over him with the greatest tenderness, and was indefatigable in his efforts to administer consolation to his depressed spirit. He once entertained him fourteen months at the vicarage, and, with untired perseverance, labored incessantly to dissipate the dark cloud that had gathered over his mind; but to every consolatory suggestion he was utterly deaf, concluding that God had rejected him, and that, consequently, it was sinful for him even to wish for mercy. How awful are the effects of mental disorganization! how easily does it convert that into poison which was designed for solid food! how highly ought we to prize, and how thankful ought we to be, for the uninterrupted enjoyment of our mental powers!

After enduring an accumulation of anguish, almost inconceivable, for the long space of five years, unalleviated by a single glimpse of comfort, the interesting sufferer began at length gradually to recover. He listened to the advice of Mrs. Unwin, and allowed her, occasionally at least, to divert his mind from those melancholy considerations by which he had so long been burdened. It now occurred to Mrs. Unwin that he might probably find it beneficial to be employed in some amusing occupation. She suggested this to some of her neighbors, who all deplored the poet's case, felt a lively interest in his welfare, and would gladly have done any thing in their power, that was the least likely to mitigate his distress.

The children of one of his neighbors had recently given them, for a plaything, a young leveret; it was at that time about three months old. Understanding better how to teaze the poor creature, than to feed it, and soon becoming weary of their charge, they readily consented that their father, who saw it pining, and growing leaner every day, should offer it to Cowper's acceptance. Beginning then to be glad of any thing that would engage his attention without fatiguing it, he was willing enough to take the prisoner under his protection, perceiving that, in the management of such an animal, and in the attempt to tame it, he should find just that sort of employment which his case required. It was soon known among his neighbors that he was pleased with the present; and the consequence was, that in a short time, he had as many leverets offered him, as would have stocked a paddock. He undertook the care of three, which he named Puss, Tiney, and Bess. The choice of their food, and the diversity of their dispositions, afforded him considerable amusement, and their occasional diseases excited his sympathy and tenderness. One remained with him during the whole of his abode at Olney, and was afterwards celebrated in his unrivalled poem, the Task; and, at its decease, honored with a beautiful epitaph from his pen; another lived with him nearly nine years; but the third did not long survive the restraints of its confined situation. An admirably written narrative of these animals, from his own pen, was inserted in the Gentleman's Magazine of that day, which has since been published at the end of almost every edition of his works.

For a considerable period, Cowper's only companions were Mrs. Unwin, Mr. and Mrs. Newton, and his three hares. About this time, it pleased God to remove Mr. Newton to another scene of labor. Deeply interested in the welfare of his afflicted friend, and aware of his aversion to the visits of strangers, Mr. Newton thought it advisable, before he left Olney, to introduce to his interesting but most afflicted friend, the Rev. Mr. Bull, of Newport Pagnel. After some difficulty, Mr. Newton triumphed over Cowper's extreme reluctance to see strangers, and Mr. Bull visited him regularly once a fortnight, and gradually acquired his cordial and confidential esteem.

Of this gentleman, Cowper, in one of his letters, gives the following playful and amusing description:

"You are not acquainted with the Rev. Mr. Bull, of Newport—perhaps it is as well for you that you are not. You would regret still more than you do, that there are so many miles interposed between us. He spends part of the day with us to-morrow. A dissenter, but a liberal one; a man of letters and of genius; master of a fine imagination, or rather not master of it; an imagination which, when he finds himself in the company he loves, and can confide in, runs away with him into such fields of speculation, as amuse and enliven every other imagination that has the happiness to be of the party. At other times, he has a tender and delicate sort of melancholy in his disposition, not less agreeable in its way. No men are better qualified for companions in such a world as this, than men of such a temperament. Every scene of life has two sides, a dark and a bright one; and the mind that has an equal mixture of melancholy and vivacity, is best of all qualified for the contemplation of either. He can be lively without levity, and pensive without dejection. Such a man is Mr. Bull: but—he smokes tobacco—nothing is perfect."

Mr. Bull, who probably regarded the want of some regular employment as one of the predisposing causes of Cowper's illness, prevailed upon him to translate several spiritual songs, from the poetry of Madame de la Mothe Guyon, the friend of the mild and amiable Fenelon. The devotion of these songs is not of that purely unexceptionable character which might be wished; and if devotional excitement had been the cause of Cowper's malady, no recommendation could have been more injudicious. The result, however, was beneficial to the poet, instead of being injurious, proving irresistibly that devotion had a soothing, rather than an irritating effect upon his mind.

Much as Cowper admired these songs, for that rich vein of pure and exalted devotion, which runs through the whole of them, he was not insensible to their defects, as will appear by the following remarks:—"The French poetess is certainly chargeable with the fault you mention, though I think it not so glaring in the piece I sent you. I have endeavored, indeed, in all the translations I have made, to cure her of the evil, either by the suppression of exceptionable passages, or by a more sober manner of expression. Still, however, she will be found to have conversed familiarly with God, but I hope not fulsomely, nor so as to give reasonable disgust to a religious reader. That God should deal familiarly with them, or, which is the same thing, that he should permit man to deal familiarly with him, seems not very difficult to conceive, or presumptuous to suppose, when some things are taken into consideration. Wo to the sinner, however, that shall dare to take a liberty with him that is not warranted by his word, or to which he himself has not encouraged him. When he assumed man's nature, he revealed himself as the friend of man. He conversed freely with him while he was upon earth, and as freely with him after his resurrection. I doubt not, therefore, that it is possible to enjoy an access to him even now, unencumbered with ceremonious awe, easy, delightful, and without restraint. This, however, can only be the lot of those who make it the business of their lives to please him, and to cultivate communion with him; and then I presume there can be no danger of offence, because such a habit of the soul is his own creation, and near as we come, we come no nearer to him than he is pleased to draw us; if we address him as children, it is because he tells us he is our Father: if we unbosom ourselves to him as our friend, it is because he calls us friends; if we speak to him in the language of love, it is because he first used it, thereby teaching us that it is the language he delights to hear from his people. But I confess, that through the weakness, the folly, and corruption of human nature, this privilege, like all other Christian privileges, is liable to abuse. There is a mixture of evil in every thing we do; indulgence encourages us to encroach, and while we exercise the rights of children, we become childish. Here, I think, is the point in which my authoress failed, and here it is that I have particularly guarded my translation, not afraid of representing her as dealing with God familiarly, but foolishly, irreverently, and without due attention to his majesty, of which she is somewhat guilty. A wonderful fault for such a woman to fall into, who spent her life in the contemplation of his glory, who seems to have been always impressed with a sense of it, and sometimes quite absorbed by the views she had of it."

Mrs. Unwin, who still watched over her patient with the tenderest anxiety, saw with inexpressible delight, the first efforts of his mind, after his long and painful depression; and perceiving that translation had a good effect, she wisely urged him to employ his mind in composing some original poem, which she thought more likely to become beneficial. Cowper now listened to her advice, and felt so powerfully the obligations under which he was laid to her, for her continued attention and kindness, that he cheerfully complied with her request. The result exceeded her most sanguine expectation. A beautiful poem was produced, entitled Table Talk; another, called the Progress of Error, was shortly composed; Truth, as a pleasing contrast, followed it; this was succeeded by others of equal excellence, proving that the poet's mind had now completely emerged from that darkness in which it had so long been confined by his depressive malady.

It is interesting to observe, that Cowper's poems were almost invariably composed at the suggestion of friends. He wrote hymns to oblige Mr. Newton; translated Madame Guyon's songs, to gratify his friend Mr. Bull, and composed the greater part of his poems, to please Mrs. Unwin. The influence of friendship on his tender mind, was powerfully affecting; and he ever regarded it as his happiest inspiration. It kindled the warmth of his heart into a flame, intense and ardent, stimulated into activity the rich, but dormant powers of his mind, and produced those bursts of poetic feeling and beauty, which abound in his unrivalled compositions.

Cowper regained his admirable talent for composition, both in poetry and in prose, and renewed his correspondence with some of his more intimate friends, long before his mind was wholly convalescent; and his letters, written at this period, afford the best clue to the painful peculiarities of his case. On every other subject but that of his own feelings, his remarks are in the highest degree pleasing; and there was often a sprightliness and vivacity about them, that seemed to indicate a state of mind at the remotest distance from painful; but whenever he adverted to his own case, it was in a tone the most plaintive and melancholy.

Immediately after the removal of his esteemed friends, Mr. and Mrs. Newton, he commenced a correspondence with them, which he regularly kept up during almost the whole of his life. To Mrs. Newton, soon after this event, he thus describes his feelings on the occasion. "The vicarage-house became a melancholy object as soon as Mr. Newton had left it; when you left it, it became more melancholy; now it is actually occupied by another family, I cannot even look at it without being shocked. As I walked in the garden last evening, I saw the smoke issue from the study chimney, and said to myself, that used to be a sign that Mr. Newton was there; but it is so no longer. The walls of the house know nothing of the change that has taken place, the bolt of the chamber door sounds

just as it used to do, and when Mr. P—— goes up stairs, for aught I know, or ever shall know, the fall of his foot can hardly, perhaps, be distinguished from that of Mr. Newton. But Mr. Newton's foot will never be heard upon that staircase again. These reflections, and such as these, occurred to me on this occasion. If I were in a condition to leave Olney, I certainly would not stay in it. It is no attachment to the place that binds me here, but an unfitness for every other. I lived in it once, but now I am buried in it, and have no business with the world on the outside of my sepulchre; my appearance would startle them, and theirs would be shocking to me."

In a letter to Mr. Newton, 3d May, 1780, he thus writes:—"You indulge me in such a variety of subjects, and allow me such a latitude of excursion, in this scribbling employment, that I have no excuse for silence. I am much obliged to you for swallowing such boluses as I send you, for the sake of my gilding, and verily believe, I am the only man alive, from whom they would be welcome, to a palate like yours. I wish I could make them more splendid than they are, more alluring to the eye, at least, if not more pleasing to the taste, but my leaf-gold is tarnished, and has received such a tinge from the vapors that are ever brooding over my mind, that I think it no small proof of your partiality to me, that you will read my letters. If every human being upon earth could think for one quarter of an hour, as I have thought for many years, there might perhaps be many miserable men among them, but not one unawakened one would be found, from the Arctic to the Antarctic circle. At present, the difference between them and me is greatly to their advantage. I delight in baubles, and know them to be so, for, rested in, and viewed without a reference to their author, what is the earth, what are the planets, what is the sun itself, but a bauble? Better for a man never to have seen them, or to see them with the eyes of a brute, stupid and unconscious of what he beholds, than not to be able to say, 'The maker of these wonders is my friend!' Their eyes have never been opened, to see that they are trifles; mine have been, and will be, till they are closed for ever."

"I live in a world abounding with incidents, upon which many grave, and perhaps some profitable observations, might be made; but these incidents never reaching my unfortunate ears, both the entertaining narrative, and the reflections it might suggest, are to be annihilated and lost. I look back on the past week, and say, what did it produce? I ask the same question of the week preceding, and duly receive the same answer from both—nothing! A situation like this, in which I am as unknown to the world, as I am ignorant of all that passes in it —in which I have nothing to do but to think, would exactly suit me, were my subjects of meditation as agreeable as my leisure is uninterrupted: my passion for retirement is not at all abated, after so many years spent in the most sequestered state, but rather increased; a circumstance I should esteem wonderful, to a degree not to be accounted for, considering the condition of my mind, did I not know that we think as we are made to think, and of course, approve and prefer, as Providence, who appoints the bounds of our habitation, chooses for us. Thus, I am both free, and a prisoner at the same time. The world is before me; I am not shut up in the Bastile; there are no moats about my castle, no locks upon my gates, of which I have not the keys; but an invisible, uncontrollable agency, a local attachment, an inclination, more forcible than I ever felt, even to the place of my birth, serves me for prison walls, and for bounds, which I cannot pass. In former years I have known sorrow, and before I had ever tasted of spiritual trouble. The effect was, an abhorrence of the scene in which I had suffered so much, and a weariness of those objects which I had so long looked at with an eye of despondency and dejection. But it is otherwise with me now. The same cause subsisting, and in a much more powerful degree, fails to produce its natural effect. The very stones in the garden walls, are my intimate acquaintance. I should miss almost the minutest object, and be disagreeably affected by its removal, and am persuaded, that were it possible I could leave this incommodious nook for a twelvemonth, I should return to it again with raptures, and be transported with the sight of objects, which, to all the world beside, would be at least indifferent; some of them, perhaps, such as the ragged thatch, and the tottering walls, disgusting. But so it is, and it is so, because here is to be my abode, and because such is the appointment of Him who placed me in it. It is the place of all the world I love the most, not for any happiness it affords me, but because here I can be miserable with most convenience to myself, and with least disturbance to others."

In a letter to Mrs. Unwin's son, with whom he had now commenced a correspondence, he thus describes his feelings:—"So long as I am pleased with an employment, I am capable of unwearied application, because my feelings are all of the intense kind: I never received a little pleasure from any thing in my life; if I am delighted, it is in the extreme. The unhappy consequence of this temperature is, that my attachment to my occupation seldom outlives the novelty of it. That nerve of my imagination that feels the touch of any particular amusement, twangs under the energy of the pressure with so much vehemence, that it soon becomes sensible of weariness and fatigue."

Writing to Mr. Newton, 12th July, 1780, he thus again adverts to his own case:—"Such nights as I frequently spend, are but a miserable prelude to the succeeding day, and indispose me, above all things, to the business of writing. Yet with a pen in my hand, if I am able to write at all, I find myself gradually relieved; and as I am glad of any employment that may serve to engage my attention, so especially I am pleased with an opportunity of conversing with you, though it be but upon paper. This occupation, above all others, assists me in that self-deception, to which I am indebted for all the little comfort I enjoy; things seem to be as they were, and I almost forget that they can never be so again. If I have strength of mind, I have not strength of body for the task, which, you say, some would impose upon me. I cannot bear much thinking. The meshes of that fine net-work, the brain, are composed of such mere spinner's threads in me, that when a long thought finds its way into them, it buzzes, and twangs, and bustles about, at such a rate, as seems to threaten the whole contexture."

To the same correspondent he writes on another occasion:—"Your sentiments, with respect to me, are exactly like Mrs. Unwin's. She, like you, is perfectly sure of my deliverance, and often tells me so; I make her but one answer, and sometimes none at all. That answer gives *her* no pleasure, and would give *you* as little; therefore, at this time I suppress it. It is better on every account that they who interest themselves so deeply in that event, should believe the certainty of it, than that they should not. It is a comfort to *them*, at least, if it be none to me, and as I could not, if I would, so neither would I, if I could, deprive them of it. If human nature may be compared to a piece of tapestry, (and why not?) then human nature, as it subsists in me, though it is sadly faded on the right side, retains all its color on the wrong. At this season of the year,

and in this gloomy and uncomfortable climate, it is no easy matter for the owner of a mind like mine, to divert it from sad subjects, and fix it upon such as may administer to its amusement. Poetry, above all things, is useful to me in this respect. While I am held in pursuit of pretty images, or a pretty way of expressing them, I forget every thing that is irksome, and, like a boy that plays truant, determine to avail himself of the present opportunity to be amused, regardless of future consequences. It will not be long perhaps, before you will receive a poem, called the *Progress of Error;* that will be succeeded by another, in due time, called *Truth.* Don't be alarmed. I ride Pegasus with a curb. He will never run away with me again. I have even convinced Mrs. Unwin, that I can manage him, and make him stop, when I please."

On another occasion he gives the following curious and playful description of himself:—"I can compare this mind of mine to nothing that resembles it more, than to a board, that is under the carpenter's plane, (I mean while I am writing to you;) the shavings are my uppermost thoughts; after a few strokes of the tool, it acquires a new surface; this again, upon a repetition of his task, he takes off, and a new surface still succeeds. Whether the shavings of the present day, will be worth your acceptance, I know not; I am, unfortunately, made neither of cedar nor of mahogany, but *Truncus ficulnus, inutile lignum,* consequently, though I should be planed till I am as thin as a wafer, it will be but rubbish at last."

To his cousin, Mrs. Cowper, he thus plaintively describes his feelings:—"My days steal away silently, and march on, (as poor mad Lear would have made his soldiers march) as if they were shod with felt; not so silently but that I hear them, yet were it not that I am always listening to their flight, having no infirmity that I had not when I was much younger, I should deceive myself with an imagination that I am still young. I am fond of writing, as an amusement, but do not always find it one. Being rather scantily furnished with subjects that are good for any thing, and corresponding only with those who have no relish for such as are good for nothing, I often find myself reduced to the necessity, the disagreeable necessity, of writing about myself. This does not mend the matter much; for though, in a description of my own condition, I discover abundant materials to employ my pen upon, yet as the task is not very agreeable to *me,* so, I am sufficiently aware, that it is like to prove irksome to others. A painter, who should confine himself, in the exercise of his art, to the drawing of his own picture, must be a wonderful coxcomb indeed, if he did not soon grow sick of his occupation, and be peculiarly fortunate if he did not make others as sick as himself."

Notwithstanding Cowper's depressive malady, yet his views of religion, even at that period, remained unaltered, and were as much distinguished for their excellence as ever. Writing to his friend, Mr. Unwin, the following judicious remarks occur, respecting keeping the Sabbath:—"With respect to the advice you are required to give to a young lady, that she may be properly instructed in the manner of keeping the Sabbath, I just subjoin a few hints that have occurred to me on the occasion. I think the Sabbath may be considered, first, as a commandment, no less binding upon Christians than upon Jews. The spiritual people among them did not think it enough, merely to abstain from manual occupations on that day, but entering more deeply into the meaning of the precept, allotted those hours they took from the world, to the cultivation of holiness in their own souls; which ever was, and ever will be, incumbent upon all who have the Scripture in their hands, and is of perpetual obligation, both upon Jews and Christians; the commandment enjoins it, and the prophets have enforced it; and, in many instances, the breach of it has been punished with a providential severity, that has made bystanders tremble. Secondly, it may be considered as a *privilege,* which you will know how to dilate upon better than I can tell you; thirdly, as a sign of that covenant by which believers are entitled to a rest that yet remaineth; fourthly, as the *sine qua non* of the Christian character, and upon this head, I should guard against being misunderstood to mean no more than two attendances upon public worship, which is a form observed by thousands who never kept a Sabbath in their lives. Consistence is necessary to give substance and solidity to the whole. To sanctify the day at church, and to trifle it away out of church, is profanation, and vitiates all. After all, I should say to my catechumen, Do you love the day, or do you not? If you love it, you will never inquire how far you may safely deprive yourself of the enjoyment of it. If you do not love it, and you find yourself in conscience obliged to acknowledge it, that is an alarming symptom, and ought to make you tremble. If you do not love it, then it is a weariness to you, and you wish it over. The ideas of labor and rest, are not more opposite to each other than the idea of a Sabbath, and that dislike and disgust, with which it fills the souls of thousands, to be obliged to keep it: it is worse than bodily labor."

To his cousin, Mrs. Cowper, he again writes:—"I know not what impressions time may have made upon your person, for while his claws, (as our grandams called them,) strike deep furrows in some faces, he seems to sheath them with much tenderness, as if fearful of doing injury to others. But, though an enemy to the body, he is a friend to the mind, and you have doubtless found him so. Though, even in this respect, his treatment of us depends upon what he meets with at our hands, if we use him well, and listen to his admonitions, he is a friend indeed; but otherwise, the worst of enemies, who takes from us daily, something that we valued, and gives us nothing bet er in its stead. It is well with them, who, like you, can stand a tip-toe on the mountain-top of human life, look down with pleasure upon the valley they have passed, and sometimes stretch their wings in joyful hope of a happy flight into eternity. Yet a little while, and your hope will be accomplished. The course of a rapid river is the justest of all emblems, to express the variableness of our scene below. Shakspeare says, none ever bathed himself twice in the same stream; and it is equally true, that the world upon which we close our eyes at night, is never the same as that upon which we open them in the morning."

CHAPTER VIII.

Makes preparations for publishing his first volume. Reasons assigned for it. Beneficial effects of composition on his mind. His comparative indifference to the success of his volume. Great care, nevertheless, with which he composed it. His readiness to avail himself of the assistance and advice of his friends. The interest which Mr. Newton took in his publication. Writes the preface for the volume. Cowper's judicious reply to some objections that had been made to it. Publication of the volume. Manner in which it was received. Continuance of Cowper's depression. State of his mind respecting religion. His warm attachment to the leading truths of the gospel. Ardent desires to make his volume the means of conveying them to others.

More than seven years had now elapsed since the commencement of Cowper's distressing malady; and though he was not yet perfectly recovered, he had, at length, gradually acquired the full exercise of those mental powers for which he was so highly distinguished. Having now employed his

muse, with the happiest effect, for nearly two years, he had composed a sufficient number of lines to form a respectable volume. Mrs. Unwin had witnessed with delight the productions of his pen, and she now wisely urged him to make them public. He was, at first, exceedingly averse to the measure; but, after some consideration, he at length yielded to her suggestions, and made preparations to appear as an author. His letters to his correspondents on the subject are highly interesting, and afford a full development of the design he had in view in appearing before the public. To Mr. Unwin he thus writes:—"Your mother says I *must* write, and *must* admits of no apology; I might otherwise plead that I have nothing to say, that I am weary, that I am dull, that it would be more convenient for you, as well as for myself, that I should let it alone. But all these pleas, and whatever pleas besides, either disinclination, indolence, or necessity, might suggest, are overruled, as they ought to be, the moment a lady adduces her irrefragable argument, *you must*. Urged by her entreaties, I have at length sent a volume to the press: the greater part of it is the produce of last winter. Two-thirds of the volume will be occupied by four pieces. It contains, in all, about two thousand five hundred lines; and will be known, in due time, by the names of *Table Talk*, *The Progress of Error*, *Truth*, *Expostulation*, with an addition of some smaller poems, all of which, I believe, have passed under your notice. Altogether they will furnish a volume of tolerable bulk, that need not be indebted to an intolerable breadth of margin, for the importance of its figure."

In this undertaking he was encouraged by his friend, Mr. Newton, with whom he corresponded on the subject, and to whom he thus discloses his mind:—"If a board of inquiry were to be established, at which poets were to undergo an examination respecting the motives that induced them to publish, and I were to be summoned to attend, that I might give an account of mine, I think I could truly say, what perhaps few poets could, that though I have no objection to lucrative consequences, if any such should follow, they are not my aim; much less is it my ambition to exhibit myself to the world as a genius. What then, says Mr. President, can possibly be your motive? I answer, with a bow, amusement. There is no occupation within the compass of my small sphere, poetry excepted, that can do much towards diverting that train of melancholy forebodings, which, when I am not thus employed, are for ever pouring themselves in upon me. And if I did not publish what I write, I could not interest myself sufficiently in my own success to make an amusement of it. My own amusement, however, is not my sole motive. I am merry that I may decoy people into my company, and grave that they may be the better for it. Now and then I put on the garb of a philosopher, and take the opportunity that disguise procures me, to drop a word in favor of religion. In short, there is some froth, and here and there a bit of sweet-meat, which seems to entitle it justly to the name of a certain dish the ladies call a trifle. I did not choose to be more facetious, lest I should consult the taste of my readers at the expense of my own approbation; nor more serious than I have been, lest I should forfeit theirs. A poet in my circumstances has a difficult part to act; one minute obliged to bridle his humor, if he has any, the next, to clap a spur to the sides of it. Now ready to weep, from a sense of the importance of his subject, and on a sudden constrained to laugh, lest his gravity should be mistaken for dullness."

Writing to his amiable correspondent, Mrs. Cowper, 19th October, 1781, he says:—"I am preparing a volume of poems for the press, which I imagine will make its appearance in the course of the winter. It is a bold undertaking at this time of day, when so many writers of the greatest abilities have gone before, who seem to have anticipated every valuable subject, as well as all the graces of poetical embellishment, to step forth into the world in the character of a bard; especially when it is considered that luxury, idleness, and vice, have debauched the public taste, and that scarcely any thing but childish fiction, or what has a tendency to excite a laugh, is welcome. I thought, however, that I had stumbled upon some subjects that had never been poetically treated, and upon some others, to which I imagined it would not be difficult to give an air of novelty by the manner of treating them. My sole drift is to be useful—a point which, however, I knew I should in vain aim at, unless I could be likewise entertaining. I have therefore fixed these two strings to my bow; and by the help of both, have done my best to send my arrow to the mark. My readers will hardly have begun to laugh before they will be called upon to correct that levity, and peruse me with a more serious air. I cast a side-long glance at the good-liking of the world at large, more for the sake of their advantage and instruction than their praise. They are children; if we give them physic, we must sweeten the rim of the cup with honey. As to the effect, I leave that in His hands, who alone can produce it: neither prose nor verse can reform the manners of a dissolute age, much less can they inspire a sense of religious obligation, unless assisted, and made efficacious by the power who superintends the truth he has vouchsafed to impart."

To his warm friend, Mr. Hill, he thus amusingly adverts to his publication:—"I am in the press, and it is in vain to deny it. My labors are principally the production of the last winter; all, indeed, except a few of the minor pieces. When I can find no other occupation, I think, and when I think, I am very apt to do it in rhyme. Hence it comes to pass that the season of the year which generally pinches off the flowers of poetry, unfolds mine, such as they are, and crowns me with a winter garland. In this respect therefore, I and my contemporary bards are by no means upon a par. They write when the delightful influences of fine weather, fine prospects, and a brisk motion of the animal spirits, make poetry almost the language of nature; and I, when icicles depend from all the leaves of the Parnassian laurel, and when a reasonable man would as little expect to succeed in verse, as to hear a blackbird whistle. This must be my apology to you for whatever want of fire and animation you may observe in what you will shortly have the perusal of. As to the public, if they like me not, there is no remedy. A friend will weigh and consider all disadvantages, and make as large allowances as an author can wish, and larger, perhaps, than he has any right to expect, but not so the world at large; whatever they do not like, they will not by an apology be persuaded to forgive: it would be in vain to tell *them* that I wrote my verses in January, for they would immediately reply, Why did you not write them in May? A question that might puzzle a wiser head than we poets are generally blessed with."

It might have been supposed that the vigorous exercise of the mental powers which the composition of poetry like that of Cowper's required, would have increased this depressive malady, instead of diminishing it. His, however, was a peculiar case, and he found it of great advantage, as we learn in a letter to Mr. Newton, where he says:—"I have never found an amusement, among the many that I have been obliged to have recourse to, that so well answered the purpose for which I used it, as composition. The quieting and composing effect of it was such, and so totally absorbed have I sometimes been

in my rhyming occupation, that neither the past nor the future (those themes which to me are so fruitful in regret at other times) had any longer a share in my contemplation. For this reason I wish, and have often wished since the fit left me, that it would seize me again, but hitherto I have wished in vain. I see no want of subjects, but I feel a total disability to discuss them. Whether it is thus with other writers or not, I am ignorant, but I should suppose my case, in this respect, a little peculiar. The voluminous writers at least, whose vein of fancy seems always to have been rich in proportion to their occasions, cannot have been so unlike, and so unequal to themselves. There is this difference between my poetship and the generality of *them;* they appear to have been ignorant how much they stood indebted to an Almighty power for the exercise of those talents they supposed to be their own. Whereas I know, and know most perfectly, that my power to think, whatever it be, and consequently my power to compose, is, as much as my outward form, afforded to me by the same hand that makes me, in any respect, differ from a brute."

The commencement of authorship is generally a period of much painful anxiety: few persons have ventured on such an undertaking without experiencing considerable excitement; and in a mind like Cowper's, it might have been supposed that such would have been the case in a remarkable degree. No person, however, ever ventured before the public, in the character of an author, with less anxiety. Writing to Mr. Unwin, he says:—"You ask me how I feel on the occasion of my approaching publication? Perfectly at ease. If I had not been pretty well assured beforehand, that my tranquillity would be but little endangered by such a measure, I would never have engaged in it, for I cannot bear disturbance. I have had in view two principal objects; first, to amuse myself, and then to compass that point in such a manner, that others might possibly be the better for my amusement. If I have succeeded, it will give me pleasure; but if I have failed, I shall not be mortified to the degree that might perhaps be expected. The critics cannot deprive me of the pleasure I have in reflecting, that so far as my leisure has been employed in writing for the public, it has been employed conscientiously, and with a view to their advantage. There is nothing agreeable, to be sure, in being chronicled for a dunce; but I believe there lives not a man upon earth who would be less affected by it than myself."

Indifferent as he was to the result of his publications, he was far from being careless in their composition. Perhaps no author ever took more pains with his productions, or sought more carefully to make them worthy of public approbation. In one of his letters, adverting to this subject, he says:—"To touch and retouch is, though some writers boast of negligence, and others would be ashamed to show their foul copies, the secret of almost all good writing, especially in verse. I am never weary of it myself, and if you would take as much pains as I do, you would not need to ask for my corrections. With the greatest indifference to fame, which you know me too well to suppose me capable of affecting, I have taken the utmost pains to deserve it. This may appear a mystery, or a paradox, in practice, but it is true. I considered that the taste of the day is refined and delicate to excess, and that to disgust that delicacy of the taste by a slovenly inattention to it, would be to forfeit at once all hope of being useful; and for this reason, though I have written more verse this year than perhaps any man in England, I have finished, and polished, and touched and retouched, with the utmost care. Whatever faults I may be chargeable with as a poet, I cannot accuse myself of negligence; I never suffer a line to pass till I have made it as good as I can; and though some may be offended at my doctrines, I trust none will be disgusted by slovenly inaccuracy, in the numbers, the rhymes, or the language. If, after all, I should be converted into waste paper, it may be my misfortune, but it will not be my fault; and I shall bear it with perfect serenity."

In the character of Cowper there was nothing like an overweening confidence in his own powers. No person was ever more willing to avail himself of the advice of his friends, nor did any one ever receive advice more gratefully. Not satisfied with bestowing upon his productions the greatest pains himself, he occasionally submitted them to the correction of others, and his correspondence affords many proofs of his readiness to profit by the slightest hint. To Mr. Newton he thus writes:—"I am much obliged to you for the pains you have taken with my poems, and for the manner in which you have interested yourself in their appearance. Your favorable opinion affords me a comfortable presage with respect to that of the public; for though I make allowance for your partiality to me, yet I am sure you would not suffer me, unadmonished, to add myself to the number of insipid rhymers with whose productions the world is already too much pestered. I forgot to mention, that Johnson uses the discretion my poetship has allowed him, with much discernment. He has suggested several alterations, or rather marked several defective passages, which I have corrected, much to the advantage of the poems. In the last sheet he sent me, he noticed three such, which I reduced to better order. In the foregoing sheet I assented to his criticisms in some instances, and chose to abide by the original expressions in others; whenever he has marked such lines as did not please him, I have, as often as I could, paid all possible respect to his animadversions. Thus we jog on together comfortably enough; and perhaps it would be as well for authors in general, if their booksellers, when men of some taste, are allowed, though not to tinker the work themselves, yet to point out the flaws, and humbly to recommend an improvement. I have also to thank you, and ought to have done it in the first place, for having recommended to me the suppression of some lines, which I am now more than ever convinced, would at least have done me no honor."

The great interest Mr. Newton took in Cowper's publication, induced the poet to request him to compose the preface; and his correspondence with Mr. Newton on the subject is alike honorable to his judgment and his feelings; and affords a striking display of the strong hold which religion had upon his affections. He thus introduces the subject to Mr. Newton:—"With respect to the poem called *Truth*, it is so true that it can hardly fail of giving offence to an unenlightened reader. I think, therefore, that in order to obviate in some measure those prejudices that will naturally erect their bristles against it, an explanatory preface, such as you (and nobody else so well as you) can furnish me with, will have every grace of propriety to recommend it; or if you are not averse to the task, and your avocations will allow you to undertake it, and if you think it will be still more proper, I should be glad to be indebted to you for a preface to the whole. I admit that it will require much delicacy, but am far from apprehending that you will find it difficult to succeed. You can draw a hair-stroke, where another man would make a blot as broad as a sixpence."

The preface composed by Mr. Newton, though it was in the highest degree satisfactory to Cowper, and was admitted by him to be every thing that he could wish, was nevertheless thought by others to be of too sombre a cast to introduce a volume of

poems pre-eminently distinguished for their vivacity and eloquence. Adverting to this objection, and to the suggestion of the publisher to suppress it, Cowper thus writes:—"If the men of the world are so merrily disposed, in the midst of a thousand calamities, that they will not deign to read a preface, of three or four pages, because the purport of it is serious, they are far gone, indeed, in the last stage of a frenzy. I am, however, willing to hope, that such is not the case: curiosity is an universal passion. There are few persons who think a book worth reading, but feel a desire to know something about the writer of it. This desire will naturally lead them to peep into the preface, where they will soon find, that a little perseverance will furnish them with some information on the subject. If, therefore, your preface finds no readers, I shall take it for granted that it is because the book itself is accounted not worth their notice. Be that as it may, it is quite sufficient that I have played the antic myself for their diversion; and that, in a state of dejection such as they are absolute strangers to, I have sometimes put on an air of cheerfulness and vivacity, to which I myself am in reality a stranger, for the sake of winning their attention to more useful matter. I cannot endure the thought, for a moment, that you should descend to my level on the occasion, and court their favor in a style not more unsuitable to your function, than to the constant and consistent strain of your whole character and conduct. Though your preface is of a serious cast, it is free from all offensive peculiarities, and contains none of those obnoxious doctrines at which the world is too apt to be angry. It asserted nothing more than every rational creature must admit to be true—that divine and earthly things can no longer stand in competition with each other, in the judgment of any man, than while he continues ignorant of their respective value; and that the moment the eyes are opened, the latter are always cheerfully relinquished for the former. It is impossible for me, however, to be so insensible to your kindness in writing the preface, as not to be desirous of defying all contingencies, rather than entertain a wish to suppress it. It will do me honor, indeed, in the eyes of those whose good opinion is worth having, and if it hurts me in the estimation of others, I cannot help it; the fault is neither yours nor mine, but theirs. If a minister's is a more splendid character than a poet's, and I think nobody that understands their value can hesitate in deciding that question, then, undoubtedly, the advantage of having our names united in the same volume is all on my side."

Cowper's first volume was published in the spring of 1782. Its success, at first, fell far short of what might have been anticipated from its extraordinary merit. It was not long, however, before the more intelligent part of the reading public appreciated its value. It soon found its way into the hands of all lovers of literature. Abounding with some of the finest passages that are to be met with, either in ancient or modern poetry, it was impossible that it should remain long unnoticed. By mere readers of taste, it was read for the beauty and elegance of its composition; by many, it was eagerly sought after for the sprightliness, vivacity, and wit, with which it abounded; by Christians, of all denominations, it was read with unfeigned pleasure for the striking and beautiful descriptions it contained of doctrinal, practical, and experimental Christianity.

It would scarcely be supposed that the author of a volume of poems like this, exhibiting such a diversity of powers as could not fail to charm the mind, delight the imagination, and improve the heart, could have remained, during the whole time he was composing it, in a state of great and painful depression. Such, however, was the peculiarity of Cowper's malady, that a train of melancholy thoughts seemed ever to be pouring themselves in upon his mind, which neither himself nor his friends were ever able to account for, satisfactorily. Writing to his friend, Mr. Newton, who had recently paid him a visit, he thus discloses the state of his mind:—"My sensations at your departure were far from pleasant. When we shall meet again, and in what circumstances, or whether we shall meet or not, is an article to be found nowhere but in that providence which belongs to the current year, and will not be understood till it is accomplished. This I know, that your visit was most agreeable to me, who, though I live in the midst of many agreeables, am but little sensible of their charms. But when you came, I determined, as much as possible, to be deaf to the suggestions of despair; that if I could contribute but little to the pleasure of the opportunity, I might not dash it with unseasonable melancholy, and like an instrument with a broken string, interrupt the harmony of the concert."

It is gratifying to observe, that neither the attention which Cowper paid to his publication, nor the depressive malady with which he was afflicted, could divert his attention from the all-important concerns of religion. A tone of deep seriousness, and genuine Christian feeling, pervades many of his letters written about this time. To Mr. Newton he thus writes:—"You wish you could employ your time to better purpose, yet are never idle, in all that you do; whether you are alone, or pay visits, or receive them; whether you think, or write, or walk, or sit still, the state of your mind is such as discovers even to yourself, in spite of all its wanderings, that there is a principle at the bottom, whose determined tendency is towards the best things. I do not at all doubt the truth of what you say, when you complain of that crowd of trifling thoughts that pesters you without ceasing; but then you always have a serious thought standing at the door of your imagination, like a justice of the peace, with the Riot Act in his hand, ready to read it and disperse the mob. Here lies the difference between you and me. You wish for more attention, I for less. Dissipation itself would be welcome to me, so it were not a vicious one; but however earnestly invited, it is coy, and keeps at a distance. Yet with all this distressing gloom upon my mind, I experience, as you do, the slipperiness of the present hour, and the rapidity with which time escapes me. Every thing around us, and every thing that befalls us, constitutes a variety, which, whether agreeable or otherwise, has still a thievish propensity; and steals from us days, months, and years, with such unparalleled suddenness, that even while we say they are here, they are gone. From infancy to manhood, is rather a tedious period, chiefly, I suppose, because at that time we act under the control of others, and are not suffered to have a will of our own. But thence downward into the vale of years is such a declivity, that we have just an opportunity to reflect upon the steepness of it, and then find ourselves at the bottom."

The following extracts from his correspondence with Mr. Unwin, who at that time was on a visit at Brightelmstone, will show the deep tone of seriousness that pervaded his mind:—"I think with you, that the most magnificent object under heaven is the great deep; and cannot but feel an unpolite species of astonishment, when I consider the multitudes that view it without emotion, and even without reflection. In all its varied forms, it is an object, of all others, the most suitable to affect us with lasting impressions of the awful power that created and controls it. I am the less inclined to think this negligence excusable, because at a time of life when I gave as little attention to religion as any

man, I yet remember that the waves would preach to me, and that in the midst of worldly dissipation I had an ear to hear them. In the fashionable amusements which you will probably witness for a time, you will discern no signs of sobriety, or true wisdom. But it is impossible for a man who has a mind like yours, capable of reflection, to observe the manners of a multitude without learning something. If he sees nothing to imitate, he is sure to see something to avoid. If nothing to congratulate his fellow-creatures upon, at least much to excite his compassion. There is not, I think, so melancholy a sight in the world, (an hospital is not to be compared to it,) as that of a multitude of persons, distinguished by the name of gentry, who, gentle perhaps by nature, and made more gentle by education, have the appearance of being innocent and inoffensive, yet being destitute of all religion, or not at all governed by the religion they profess, are none of them at any great distance from an eternal state, where self-deception will be impossible, and where amusements cannot enter. Some of them we may hope will be reclaimed; it is most probable that many will, because mercy, if one may be allowed the expression, is fond of distinguishing itself by seeking its objects among the most desperate class; but the Scripture gives no encouragement to the warmest charity, to expect deliverance for them all. When I see an afflicted and unhappy man, I say to myself, there is perhaps a man whom the world would envy, if they knew the value of his sorrows, which are possibly intended only to soften his heart, and to turn his affections towards their proper centre. But when I see or hear of a crowd of voluptuaries, who have no ears but for music, no eyes but for splendor, and no tongues but for impertinence and folly—I say, or at least I see occasion to say, this is madness—this, persisted in, must have a tragical conclusion. It will condemn you, not only as Christians, unworthy of the name, but as intelligent creatures—you know by the light of Nature, if you have not quenched it, that there is a God, and that a life like yours cannot be according to his will. I ask no pardon of you for the gravity and gloominess of these reflections, which, with others of a similar complexion, are sure to occur to me when I think of a scene of public diversion like that you have witnessed."

The following remarks, extracted from a letter to the same correspondent, while they serve to display the state of his mind respecting religion, exhibit at the same time the high value which he set upon the leading truths of the gospel:—"When I wrote this poem on Truth, it was indispensably necessary that I should set forth that doctrine which I know to be true; and that I should pass, what I understood to be a just censure, upon opinions and persuasions that stand in direct opposition to it; because, though some errors may be innocent, and even religious errors are not always dangerous, yet in a case where the faith and hope of a Christian are concerned, they must necessarily be destructive; and because neglecting this, I should have betrayed my subject; either suppressing what in my judgment is of the last importance, or giving countenance, by a timid silence, to the very evils it was my design to combat. That you may understand me better, I will subjoin, that I wrote that poem on purpose to inculcate the eleemosynary character of the gospel, as a dispensation of mercy, in the most absolute sense of the word, to the exclusion of all claims of merit on the part of the receiver; consequently to set the brand of invalidity upon the plea of works, and to discover, upon scriptural ground, the absurdity of that notion, which includes a solecism in the very terms of it, that man by repentance and good works may deserve the mercy of his Maker. I call it solecism, because mercy deserved ceases to be mercy, and must take the name of justice. This is the opinion which I said, in my last, the world would not acquiesce in, but except this, I do not recollect that I have introduced a syllable into any of my pieces that they can possibly object to; and even this I have endeavored to deliver from doctrinal dryness, by as many pretty things, in the way of trinket and plaything, as I could muster upon the subject. So that if I have rubbed their gums, I have taken care to do it with a coral, and even that coral embellished by the ribbon to which it is attached, and recommended by the tinkling of all the bells I could contrive to annex to it."

The following beautiful lines convey sentiments so much in unison with this extract, that we cannot forbear to insert them at the close of this chapter:—

"I am no preacher: let this hint suffice,
The cross once seen is death to every vice;
Else he that hung there suffered all his pain,
Bled, groaned, and agonized, and died in vain.
There, and there only, (though the deist rave,
And atheist, if earth bear so base a slave,)
There, and there only, is the power to save:
There no delusive hope invites despair
No mockery meets you, no deception there;
The spells and charms that blinded you before,
All vanish there, and fascinate no more."

Progress of Error.

CHAPTER IX.

Commencement of Cowper's acquaintance with Lady Austin. Pleasure it affords him. Poetic epistle to her. Her removal to Olney. Beneficial influence of her conversational powers on Cowper's mind. Occasion of his writing John Gilpin. Lines composed at Lady Austin's request. Induced by her to commence writing The Task. Principal object he had in view in composing it. Sudden and final separation from Lady Austin. Occasional severity of his depressive malady. Hopes entertained by his friends of his ultimate recovery. His own opinion upon it. Pleasing proofs of the power of religion on his mind. Tenderness of his conscience. Serious reflections. Aversion to religious deception and pretended piety. Bigotry and intolerance, with their opposite vices, levity and indifference, deplored. Sympathy with the sufferings of the poor. Enviable condition of such of them as are pious, compared with the rich who disregard religion.

In the autumn of 1781, Cowper became acquainted with Lady Austin, whose brilliant wit and unrivalled conversational powers, were admirably adapted to afford relief to a mind like his. This lady was introduced to the retired poet by her sister, the wife of a clergyman, who resided at Clifton, a mile distant from Olney, and who occasionally called upon Mrs. Unwin. Lady Austin came to pass some time with her sister, in the summer of 1781, and Mrs. Unwin, at Cowper's request, invited the ladies to tea. So much, however, was he averse to the company of strangers, that after he had occasioned the invitation, it was with considerable reluctance he was persuaded to join the party; but having at length overcome his feelings, he entered freely into conversation with Lady Austin, and derived so much benefit from her sprightly and animating discourse, that he from that time cultivated her acquaintance with the greatest attention. The opinion Cowper formed of this accomplished and talented lady, may be ascertained by the following extracts from his letters:—"Lady Austin has paid us her first visit, and not content with showing us that proof of her respect, made handsome apologies for her intrusion. She is a lively, agreeable woman; has seen much of the ways of the world, and accounts it a great simpleton, as it is. She laughs, and makes laugh without seeming to labor at it. She has many features in her character which you must ad-

mire but one in particular, on account of the rarity of it, will engage your attention and esteem. She has a degree of gratitude in her composition, so quick a sense of obligation, as is hardly to be found in any rank of life. Discover but a wish to please her, and she never forgets it; not only thanks you, but the tears will start into her eyes at the recollection of the smallest service. With these fine feelings she has the most harmless vivacity you can imagine: half an hour's conversation with her will convince you that she is one of the most intelligent, pious, and agreeable ladies you ever met with."

The following lines, part of a poetical epistle, addressed by Cowper to Lady Austin, will show how much he was delighted with his new friend:—

"Dear Anna—between friend and friend
Prose answers every common end;
Serves, in a plain and homely way,
To express the occurrence of the day,
Our health, the weather, and the news,
What walks we take, what books we choose,
And all the floating thoughts we find
Upon the surface of the mind.
But when a poet takes the pen,
Far more alive than other men,
He feels a gentle tingling come
Down to his fingers and his thumb,
Deriv'd from nature's noblest part,
The centre of a glowing heart!
And this is what the world, who knows
No flights above the pitch of prose,
His more sublime vagaries slighting,
Denominates an itch for writing.
No wonder I, who scribble rhyme
To catch the triflers of the time,
And tell them truths divine and clear,
Which couched in prose they will not hear,
Should feel that itching and that tingling
With all my purpose intermingling,
To your intrinsic merit true,
When call'd to address myself to you.
Mysterious are his ways whose power
Brings forth that unexpected hour,
When minds that never met before
Shall meet, unite, and part no more:
It is the allotment of the skies,
The hand of the supremely wise,
That guides and governs our affections
And plans and orders our connections,
Directs us in our distant road,
And marks the bounds of our abode.
This page of Providence quite new,
And now just opening to our view,
Employs our present thoughts and pains,
To guess and spell what it contains;
But day by day, and year by year,
Will make the dark enigma clear,
And furnish us, perhaps, at last,
Like other scenes already past,
With proof that we and our affairs
Are part of a Jehovah's cares:
For God unfolds by slow degrees
The purport of his deep decrees,
Sheds every hour a clearer light,
In aid of our defective sight,
And spreads, at length, before the soul,
A beautiful and perfect whole,
Which busy man's inventive brain
Toils to anticipate in vain.
Say, Anna, had you never known
The beauties of a rose full blown,
Could you, though luminous your eye,
By looking on the bud, descry,
Or guess, with a prophetic power,
The future splendor of the flower?
Just so the Omnipotent, who turns
The system of a world's concerns,
From mere minutiæ can educe
Events of most important use;
And bid a dawning sky display
The blaze of a meridian day.
The works of man tend one and all
As needs they must, both great and small,
And vanity absorbs at length
The monuments of human strength;
But who can tell how vast the plan
Which this day's incident began?
Too small, perhaps, the slight occasion
For our dim sighted observation;
It pass'd unnoticed as the bird
That cleaves the yielding air unheard,
And yet may prove, when understood,
An harbinger of endless good.
Not that I deem, or mean to call
Friendship a blessing cheap or small,
But merely to remark that ours,
Like some of nature's sweetest flowers,
Rose from a seed of tiny size
That seemed to promise no such prize:
A transient visit intervening,
And made almost without a meaning,
(Hardly the effect of inclination,
Much less of pleasing expectation!
Produced a friendship, then begun,
That has cemented us in one,
And placed it in our power to prove,
By long fidelity and love,
That Solomon has wisely spoken,
'A three-fold cord is not soon broken.'"

Lady Austin was not less delighted with her new acquaintance than Cowper and Mrs. Unwin were with her. She had previously determined to leave London, and had been looking out for a residence in the country, not far distant from her sister's. The house immediately adjoining that in which Cowper resided was at liberty; she accordingly hired it, and took possession of it in the course of the ensuing summer. Cowper thus adverts to this circumstance, in a letter to Mr. Newton:—"A new scene is opening upon us, which, whether it perform what it promises or not, will add fresh plumes to the wings of time, at least while it continues to be a subject of contemplation. Lady Austin, very desirous of retirement, especially of a retirement near her sister, an admirer of Mr. Scott as a preacher, and of your two humble servants, myself and Mrs. Unwin, is come to a determination to settle here; and has chosen the house formerly occupied by you for her future residence. I am highly pleased with the plan, upon Mrs. Unwin's account, who, since Mrs. Newton's departure, has been nearly destitute of all female connection, and has not, in any emergency, a woman to speak to. It has, in my view, and I doubt not it will have the same in yours, strong marks of a providential interposition. A female friend, who bids fair to prove herself worthy of the appellation, comes, recommended by a variety of considerations, to such a place as Olney. Since your removal, there was not in the kingdom, a retirement more absolutely such than ours. We did not covet company, but when it came, we found it agreeable. A person that understands the world well, has high spirits, a lively fancy, and great readiness of conversation, introduces a sprightliness into such a scene as this, which, if it was peaceful before, is not the worse for being a little enlivened. In case of illness too, to which we are all liable, it was rather a gloomy prospect, if we allowed ourselves to advert to it, that there was hardly a woman in the place from whom it would have been reasonable to have expected either comfort or assistance."

Preparations were made at the vicarage for the

reception of Lady Austin, and she took possession of it towards the close of 1782. Both Cowper and Mrs. Unwin were so charmed with her society, and she was so delighted with theirs, that it became their custom to dine together, at each other's houses, every alternate day. The effect of Lady Austin's almost irresistible conversational powers proved highly beneficial to the poet's mind, and contributed to remove that painful depression of which he still continued to be the subject, and which would sometimes seize him when he was in her company: even with her unrivalled talents, she was scarcely able, at times, to remove the deep and melancholy gloom which still shed its darkening influence over his mind. On one occasion, when she observed him to be sinking into rather an unusual depression, she exerted, as she was invariably accustomed to do, her utmost ability to afford him immediate relief. It occurred to her she might then probably accomplish it, by telling him a story of John Gilpin, which she had treasured up in her memory from her childhood. The amusing incidents of the story itself, and the happy manner in which it was related, had the desired effect; it dissipated the gloom of the passing hour, and he informed Lady Austin the next morning, that convulsions of laughter, brought on by the recollection of her story, had kept him awake during the greater part of the night, and that he had composed a poem on the subject. Hence arose the fascinating and amusing ballad of John Gilpin, which rapidly found its way into all the periodical publications of the day, and was admired by readers of every description.

Its happy influence on his own mind on subsequent occasions, is adverted to in the following letter to Mr. Unwin:—"You tell me that John Gilpin made you laugh tears, and that the ladies at court are delighted with my poems. Much good may they do them: may they become as wise as the writer wishes them, and they will then be much happier than he! I know there is, in the greater part of the poems which make up the volume, that wisdom which cometh from above, because it was from above that I received it. May they receive it too! for whether they drink it out of the cistern, or whether it falls upon them immediately from the clouds, as it did on me, it is all one. It is the water of life, which whosoever drinketh, shall thirst no more. As to the famous horseman above mentioned, he and his feats are an inexhaustible source of amusement. At least we find them so; and seldom meet without refreshing ourselves with the recollection of them. You are perfectly at liberty to do with them as you please, and when printed, send me a copy."

Lady Austin's intercourse with Mrs. Unwin and Cowper continued, uninterupted, till near the close of 1784; and during all this time, by her sprightly, judicious, and captivating conversation, she was often the means of rousing him from his melancholy depression. To console him, she would often exert her musical talents on the hapsichord; and at her request, he composed, among others, the following beautiful song, suited to airs she was accustomed to play:

"No longer I follow a sound,
No longer a dream I pursue;
O, happiness! not to be found,
Unattainable treasure, adieu!

I have sought thee in splendor and dress,
In the regions of pleasure and taste;
I have sought thee and seemed to possess,
But have proved thee a vision at last.

An humble ambition and hope
The voice of true wisdom inspires;
'Tis sufficient, if peace be the scope
And the summit of all our desires.

Peace may be the lot of the mind
That seeks it in meekness and love,
But rapture and bliss are confined
To the glorified spirits above!"

During the winter of 1783-4, Cowper spent the evenings in reading to these ladies, taking the liberty himself, and affording the same to them, of making remarks on what came under their notice. On these interesting occasions, Lady Austin displayed her enchanting, and almost magical powers, with singular effect. The conversation happened one evening to turn on blank verse, of which she had always expressed herself to be passionately fond. Persuaded that Cowper was able to produce, in this measure, a poem that would eclipse any thing he had hitherto written, she urged him to try his powers in that species of composition. He had hitherto written only in rhyme, and he felt considerable reluctance to make the attempt. After repeated solicitations, however, he promised her, if she would furnish the subject, he would comply with her request. "O!" she replied, "you can never be in want of a subject, you can write upon any thing: write upon this sofa." The poet obeyed her command, and the world is thus indebted to this lady for the Task, a poem of matchless beauty and excellence, embracing almost every variety of style, and every description of subject, combining elegance and ease, with sublimity and grandeur, adapted to impress the heart with sentiments of the most exalted piety and to make its readers happy in the present life, while it excites in them earnest and longing desires after the felicity and glory of heaven.

In composing this exquisite poem, however, it ought to be observed that Cowper had a higher object in view than merely to please Lady Austin. His great aim was to be useful; and, indeed, thi was his leading motive in all his productions, as is evident from the following extract from a letter to Mr. Unwin:—"In some passages of the inclosed poem, which I send for your inspection, you will observe me very satirical, especially in my second book. Writing on such subjects I could not be otherwise. I can write nothing without aiming, at least, at usefulness. It were beneath my years to do it, and still more dishonorable to my religion. I know that a reformation of such abuses as I have censured is not to be expected from the efforts of a poet; but to contemplate the world, its follies, its vices, its indifference to duty, and its strenuous attachment to what is evil, and not to reprehend it, were to approve it. From this charge at least I shall be clear, for I have neither tacitly nor expressly flattered either its characters or its customs. My principal purpose has been to allure the reader by character, by scenery, by imagery, and such poetical embellishments, to the reading of what may profit him. Subordinately to this, to combat that predilection in favor of a metropolis, that beggars and exhausts the country, by evacuating it of all its principal inhabitants; and collaterally, and as far as is consistent with this double intention, to have a stroke at vice, vanity, and folly, wherever I find them. What there is of a religious cast in the volume I have thrown towards the end of it, for two reasons: first, that I might not revolt the reader at his entrance; and, secondly, that my best impressions might be made last. Were I to write as many volumes as Lopez de Vega, or Voltaire, not one of them would be without this tincture. If the world like it not, so much the worse for them. I make all the concessions I can that I may please them, but I will not do this at the expense of my conscience. My descriptions are all from nature; not one of them second-handed. My delin-

eations of the heart are from my own experience; not one of them borrowed from books, or in the least degree conjectural."

The close of the year 1784, witnessed the completion of this extensive performance, and the commencement of another of greater magnitude, though of a different description, and less adapted for general usefulness—the translation of Homer; undertaken at the united request of Mrs. Unwin and Lady Austin. This was a remarkable period in Cowper's life. Circumstances arose, altogether unforeseen by him, and over which he had no control, which led to the removal of Lady Austin from Olney. He had so often been benefited by her company, had in so many instances been cheered by her vivacity when suffering under the influence of his depressive malady, and had received such repeated proofs of affability and kindness, that he could not entertain the thought of parting with her without considerable disquietude. Immediately, however, on perceiving that separation became requisite for the maintenance of his own peace, as well as to insure the tranquillity of his faithful and long-tried inmate, Mrs. Unwin, he wisely and firmly took such steps as were necessary to promote it, though it was at the expense of much mental anguish.

Some of Cowper's biographers have unjustly, and without the slightest foundation, attempted to cast considerable odium upon the character of Mrs. Unwin, for her conduct in this affair, as if all the blame of Cowper's separation from Lady Austin were to be laid at her door. One has even gone so far as to state, that her mind was of such a sombre hue, that it rather tended to foster than to dissipate Cowper's melancholy: an assertion utterly incapable of proof, and which, were the poet living, he would be the first to deny. The fact is, Cowper never felt any other attachment to either of these ladies than that of pure friendship, and much as he valued the society of Lady Austin, when he found it necessary for his own peace, to choose which he should please to retain, he could not hesitate for a moment to prefer the individual who had watched over him with so much tenderness, and probably to the injury of her own health. The whole of his conduct in this affair, and indeed the manner in which he has every where spoken of his faithful inmate, proves this indubitably.

Aware of the benefit he had received from Lady Austin's company, many of his friends were apprehensive that her removal would be attended with consequences seriously injurious to the poet. Deep, however, as was the impression which it made upon his mind, he bore it with much more fortitude than could have been expected, as will be seen by the manner in which he adverted to it in a letter to Mr. Hill:—"We have, as you say, lost a lively and sensible neighbor in Lady Austin, but we have been so long accustomed to a state of retirement, within one degree of solitude, and being naturally lovers of still life, we can relapse into our former duality without being unhappy in the change. To me, indeed, a third individual is not necessary, while I can have the faithful companion I have had these twenty years."

It might be imagined, from the production of Cowper's pen at this period, that he was entirely recovered from his depressive malady; such, however, was far from the case. His letters to his correspondents prove, that whatever gaiety and vivacity there was in his writings, there was nothing in his own state of mind that bore any resemblance to such emotions; but that, on the contrary, his fits of melancholy were frequent, and often painfully acute. To his friend, Mr. Newton, he thus feelingly discloses his peculiarly painful sensations:—"My heart resembles not the heart of a Christian, mourning and yet rejoicing, pierced with thorns, yet wreathed about with roses: I have the thorn without the rose. My brier is a wintry one; the flowers are withered, but the thorn remains. My days are spent in vanity, and it is impossible for me to spend them otherwise. No man upon earth is more sensible of the unprofitableness of such a life as mine than I am, or groans more heavily under the burden; but this too is vanity: my groans will not bring the remedy, because there is no remedy for me. I have been lately more dejected and more depressed than usual; more harassed by dreams in the night, and more deeply poisoned by them in the following day. I know not what is portended by an alteration for the worse after eleven years of misery, but firmly believe that it is not designed as the introduction of a change for the better. You know not what I suffered while you were here, nor was there any need you should. Your friendship for me would have made you in some degree a partaker of my woes, and your share in them would have been increased by your inability to help me. Perhaps, indeed, they took a keener edge, from the consideration of your presence. The friend of my heart, the person with whom I had formerly taken sweet counsel, no longer useful to me as a minister, no longer pleasant to me as a Christian, was a spectacle which must necessarily add the bitterness of mortification to the sadness of despair. I now see a long winter before me, and am to get through it as I can: I know the ground before I tread upon it. It is hollow; it is agitated; it suffers shocks in every direction: it is like the soil of Calabria—all whirlpool and undulation: but I must reel through it, at least if I be not swallowed up by the way. I have taken leave of the old year, and parted with it just when you did, but with very different sentiments and feelings upon the occasion. I looked back upon all the passages and occurrences of it as a traveller looks back upon a wilderness, through which he has passed with weariness and sorrow of heart, reaping no other fruit of his labor than the poor consolation, that, dreary as the desert was, he left it all behind him. The traveller would find even this comfort considerably lessened, if as soon as he passed one wilderness, he had to traverse another of equal length, and equally desolate. In this particular, his experience and mine would exactly tally. I should rejoice indeed that the old year is over and gone, if I had not every reason to expect a new one similar to it. Even the new year is already old in my account. I am not, indeed, sufficiently second-sighted to be able to boast, by anticipation, an acquaintance with the events of it yet unborn, but rest assured that, be they what they may, not one of them comes a messenger of good to me. If even death itself should be of the number, he is no friend of mine: it is an alleviation of the woes, even of an unenlightened man, that he can wish for death, and indulge a hope, at least, that in death he shall find deliverance. But, loaded as my life is with despair, I have no such comfort as would result from a probability of better things to come were it once ended. I am far more unhappy than the traveller I have just referred to; pass through whatever difficulties, dangers, or afflictions, I may, I am not a whit nearer home, unless a dungeon be called so. This is no very agreeable theme, but in so great a dearth of subjects to write upon, and especially impressed as I am at this moment with a sense of my own condition, I could choose no other. The weather is an exact emblem of my mind in its present state. A thick fog envelops every thing, and at the same time it freezes intensely. You will tell me, that this cold gloom will be succeeded by a cheerful spring, and endeavor to encourage me to hope for a spiritual change resembling it; but it will be lost labor. Na-

ture revives again; but a soul once slain lives no more. The hedge that has been apparently dead, is not so: it will burst into leaf, and blossom at the appointed time; but no such time is appointed for the *stake* that stands in it. It is as dead as it seems, and will prove itself no dissembler. The latter end of next month will complete a period of eleven years, in which I have spoken no other language. It is a long time for a man, whose eyes were once opened, to spend in darkness—long enough to make despair an inveterate habit; and such it is to me. My friends, I know, expect that I shall yet enjoy health again. They think it necessary to the existence of divine truth, that he who once had possession of it should never finally lose it. I admit the solidity of this this reasoning in every case but my own, and why not in my own? For causes which to them it appears madness to allege, but which rest upon my mind with a weight of immovable conviction. If I am recoverable, why am I thus? why crippled and made useless in the church, just at the time of life life when my judgment and experience being matured, I might be most useful? Why cashiered and turned out of service, till, according to the course of years, there is not life enough left in me to make amends for the years I have lost; till there is no reasonable hope left that the fruit can ever pay the expense of the fallow? I forestall the answer—God's ways are mysterious, and he giveth no account of his matters—an answer that would serve my purpose as well as theirs that use it. There is a *mistery* in my destruction, and in time it will be explained.

"I could easily, were it not a subject that would make us melancholy, point out to you some essential difference between the state of the person you mentioned and my own, which would prove mine to be by far the most deplorable of the two. I suppose no man would despair if he did not apprehend something singular in the circumstances of his own story, something that discriminates it from that of every other man, and that induces despair as an inevitable consequence. You may encounter his unhappy persuasion with as many instances as you please, of persons who, like him, having renounced all hope, were yet restored, and may thence infer that he, like them, shall meet with a season of restoration—but it is in vain. Every such individual accounts himself an exception to all rules, and, therefore, the blessed reverse that others have experienced affords no ground of comfortable expectation to him. But you will say, it is reasonable to conclude that as all your predecessors in this vale of misery and horror have found themselves delightfully disappointed, so may you. I grant the reasonableness of it—it would be sinful, perhaps, as well as uncharitable to reason otherwise—but an argument hypothetical in its nature, however rationally conducted, may lead to a false conclusion; and in this instance so will yours. But I forbear, and will say no more, though it is a subject on which I could write more than the mail could carry. I must deal with you as I deal with poor Mrs. Unwin, in all our disputes about it—cutting all controversy short by the event."

To a request from Mr. Newton that Cowper would favor the editor of the Theological Magazine with an occasional essay, he thus writes:—"I converse, you say, upon other subjects than that of despair, and may therefore write upon others. Indeed, my friend, I am a man of very little conversation upon any subject. From that of despair, I abstain as much as possible, for the sake of my company; but I will venture to say that it is never out of my mind one minute in the whole day. I do not mean to say that I am never cheerful. I am often so; always, indeed, when my nights have been undisturbed for a season. But the effect of such continual listening to the language of a heart hopeless and deserted, is that I can never give much more than half my attention to what is started by others, and very rarely start any thing myself. You will easily perceive that a mind thus occupied, is but indifferently qualified for the consideration of theological matters. The most useful, and the most delightful topics of that kind, are to me forbidden fruit: I tremble as I approach them. It has happened to me sometimes that I have found myself imperceptibly drawn in and made a party in such discourse. The consequence has been dissatisfaction and self-reproach. You will tell me, perhaps, that I have written upon those subjects in verse, and may therefore in prose. But there is a difference. The search after poetical expression, the rhymes and the numbers, are all affairs of some difficulty: they amuse, indeed, but are not to be attained without study, and engross, perhaps, a larger share of the attention than the subject itself."

In the spring of 1785, his friends became more sanguine in their expectations of his ultimate recovery, and they felt persuaded it would take place at no very distant period. It appears also, by the following extract, that Cowper was not himself wholly destitute of hope on the subject. Writing to Mr. Newton, he says:—"I am sensible of the tenderness and affectionate kindness with which you recollect our past intercourse, and express your hopes of my future restoration. I, too, within the last eight months have had my hopes, though they have been of short duration, cut off, like the foam upon the waters. Some previous adjustments, indeed, are necessary before a lasting expectation of comfort can take place in me. There are those persuasions in my mind, which either entirely forbid the entrance of hope, or if it enter, immediately eject it. They are incompatible with any such inmate, and must be turned out themselves before so desirable a guest can possibly have secure possession. This, you say, will be done. It may be, but it is not done yet; nor has a single step in the course of God's dealings with me been taken towards it. If I mend, no creature ever mended so slowly, that recovered at last. I am like a slug, or a snail, that has fallen into a deep well; slug as he is, he performs his descent with a velocity proportioned to his weight; but he does not crawl up again quite so fast. Mine was a rapid plunge; but my return to daylight, if I am indeed returning, is leisurely enough. Were I such as I once was, I should say that I have a claim upon your particular notice, which nothing ought to supersede. Most of your connections you may fairly be said to have formed by your own act; but your connection with me was the work of God. The kine that went up with the ark from Bathshemesh, left what they loved behind them, in obedience to an impression which to them was perfectly dark and unintelligible. Your journey to Huntingdon was not less wonderful. He, indeed, who sent you, knew well wherefore, but you knew not. That dispensation, therefore, would furnish me as long as we can both remember it, with a plea for some distinction at your hands, had I occasion to use and urge it, which I have not. But I am altered since that time; and if your affection for me had ceased, you might very reasonably justify your change by mine. I can say nothing for myself at present; but this I can venture to foretell, that should the restoration of which my friends assure me obtain, I shall undoubtedly love those who have continued to love me, even in a state of transformation from my former self, much more than ever."

It is gratifying to know, that, while such was the melancholy state of Cowper's mind, and while he steadily refused all religious comfort, come whence it might, he nevertheless afforded the most pleasing proofs, by his amiable and consistent conduct, of the firm hold which religion still had of his affections.

The excellent remarks that are to be found in his letters, written at this period, show that he had some lucid intervals, and that occasional gleams of light shot across the darkened horizon of his mind. "It strikes me," (he says on one occasion,) "as a very observable instance of providential kindness to man, that such an exact accordance had been contrived between his ear and the sounds with which, at least in a rural situation, it is almost every moment visited. All the world is sensible of the uncomfortable effect that certain sounds have upon the nerves, and consequently upon the spirits: and if a sinful world had been filled with such as would have curdled the blood, and have made the sense of hearing a perpetual inconvenience, I do not know that we should have had a right to complain. But now the fields, the woods, and the gardens, have each their concerts, and the ear of man is for ever regaled by creatures, who, while they please themselves, at the same time delight him. Even the ears that are deaf to the gospel, are continually entertained, though without appreciating it, by sounds for which they are solely indebted to its author. There is somewhere in infinite space, a world that does not roll within the precincts of mercy, and as it is reasonable, and even scriptural, to suppose that there is music in heaven, in these dismal regions perhaps the reverse of it is found—tones so dismal, as to make wo itself more insupportable, and even to acuminate despair."

In a letter to Mr. Newton, the following serious reflections occur:—"People that are but little acquainted with the terrors of divine wrath, are not much afraid of trifling with their Maker. But for my own part, I would sooner take Empledocles' leap, and fling myself into Mount Etna, than I would do it in the slightest instance, were I in circumstances to make an election. In the Scripture we find a broad and clear exhibition of mercy: it is displayed in every page. Wrath is, in comparison, but slightly touched upon, because it is not so much a discovery of wrath as of forgiveness. But had the displeasure of God been the principal subject of the book, and had it circumstantially set forth that measure of it only which may be endured in this life, the Christian world would perhaps have been less comfortable; but I believe presumptuous meddlers with the gospel would have been less frequently met with."

To Mr. Unwin he thus writes:—"Take my word for it—the word of a man singularly qualified to give his evidence in this matter, who, having enjoyed the privilege some years, has been deprived of it more, and has no hope that he shall live to recover it—those that have found a God, and are permitted to worship him, have found a treasure, of which, highly as they may prize it, they have but very scanty and limited conceptions. These are my Sunday morning speculations—the sound of the bells suggested them, or rather gave them such an emphasis, that they force their way into my pen in spite of me; for though I do not often commit them to paper, they are never absent from my mind."

"You express sorrow that your love of Christ was excited in you by a picture. Could the most insignificant thing suggest to me the thought that Christ is precious, I would not despise the thought. The meanness of the instrument cannot debase the nobleness of the principle. He that kneels to a picture of Christ is an idolater; but he in whose heart the sight of such a picture kindles a warm remembrance of the Saviour's suffering, must be a Christian. Suppose that I dream as Gardiner did, that Christ walks before me, that he turns and smiles upon me, and fills my soul with ineffable love and joy. Will a man tell me that I am deceived, that I ought not to love or rejoice in him for such a reason, because a dream is merely a picture drawn upon the imagination? I hold not with such divinity. To love Christ is the greatest dignity of man, be that affection wrought in him how it may."

No person ever formed more correct views of what really constitutes Christianity than Cowper, nor could any one ever feel a greater aversion to a mere profession of it. In a letter to one of his correspondents, the following remarks occur:—"I say amen, with all my heart, to your observations on religious characters. Men who profess themselves adepts in mathematical knowledge, in astronomy, or jurisprudence, are generally as well qualified as they would appear. The reason may be, that they are always liable to detection, should they attempt to impose upon mankind, and therefore take care to be what they pretend. In religion alone, a profession is often slightly taken up, and slovenly carried on, because forsooth, candor and charity require us to hope the best, and to judge favorably of our neighbor; and because it is easy to deceive the ignorant, who are a great majority, upon this subject. Let a man attach himself to a particular party, contend furiously for what are properly called evangelical doctrines, and enlist himself under the banner of some popular preacher, and the business is done. Behold a Christian! a saint! a phœnix! In the mean time perhaps his heart, his temper, and even his conduct, is unsanctified; possibly less exemplary than that of some avowed infidels. No matter, he can talk, he has the Bible in his pocket, and a head well stored with notions. But the quiet, humble, modest, and peaceable person, who is in his practice what the other is only in his profession, who hates a noise about religion, and therefore makes none, who, knowing the snares that are in the world, keeps himself as much out of it as he can, and never enters it but when duty calls, and even then with fear and trembling—is the Christian that will always stand highest in the estimation of those who bring all characters to the test of true wisdom, and judge of the tree by its fruits."

In another letter on a similar subject, he thus writes:—"It is indeed a melancholy consideration, that the gospel, whose direct tendency is to promote the happiness of mankind in the present as well as in the life to come, which so effectually answers the design of its author, whenever it is well understood, and sincerely believed, should, through the ignorance, the bigotry, the superstition, of its professors, and the ambition of popes and princes, have produced incidentally so much mischief; only furnishing the world with a plausible pretext to worry each other, while they sanctified the worst cause with the specious pretext of zeal for the furtherance of the best. Angels descend from heaven to publish peace between man and his Maker—the Prince of Peace himself comes to confirm and establish it; and war, hatred, and desolation, are the consequence. Thousands quarrel about the interpretation of a book, which none of them understand. He that is slain, dies firmly persuaded that the crown of martyrdom awaits him; and he that slew him, is equally convinced that he has done God service. In reality they are both mistaken and equally unentitled to the honor they have arrogated to themselves. If a multitude of blind men should set out for a certain city, and dispute about the right road till a battle ensued between them, the probable effect would be that none of them would ever reach it: and such a fray, preposterous and shocking in the extreme, would exhibit a picture in some degree resembling the original of which we have been speaking. And why is not the world thus occupied at present? only because they have exchanged a zeal that was no better than madness, for an indifference equally pitiable and absurd. The holy sepulchre has lost

its importance in the eyes of nations, called Christians, not because the light of true wisdom has delivered them from a superstitious attachment to the spot, but because he that was buried in it is no longer regarded by them as the Saviour of the world. The exercise of reason, enlightened by philosophy, has cured them indeed of the misery of an abused understanding, but together with the delusion they have lost the substance, and for the sake of the lies that were grafted upon it, have quarrelled with the truth itself. Here, then, we see the *ne plus ultra* of human wisdom, at least in affairs of religion. It enlightens the mind with respect to non-essentials, but with respect to that in which the essence of Christianity consists, leaves it perfectly in the dark. It can discover many errors that in different ages have disgraced the faith, but it is only to make way for one more fatal than them all, which represents that faith as a delusion. Why those evils have been permitted shall be known hereafter. One thing, in the mean time, is certain, that the folly and phrenzy of the professed disciples of the gospel, have been more dangerous to its interests, than all the avowed hostilities of its adversaries, and perhaps for this cause these mischiefs might be suffered to prevail for a season, that its divine original and nature might be the more illustrated, when it should appear that it was able to stand its ground for ages, against that most formidable of all attacks—the indiscretion of its friends. The outrages that have followed this perversion of the truth, have proved, indeed, a stumbling-block to individuals: the wise of this world, with all their wisdom, have not been able to distinguish between the blessing and the abuse of it. Voltaire was offended, and Gibbon has turned his back, but the flock of Christ is still nourished, and still increases, notwithstanding the unbelief of a philosopher is able to convert bread into a stone, and fish into a serpent."

The following very serious reflections occur in a letter to Mr. Newton, about this time, adverting to the sufferings of the poor at Olney, whose distressing circumstances on all occasions excited the tenderest sympathies of the poet:—"The winter sets in with great severity. The rigor of the season, and the advanced price of provisions, are very threatening to the poor. It is well with those that can feed upon a promise, and wrap themselves up warm in the robe of salvation. A good fire-side and a well-spread table are but indifferent substitutes for these better accommodations; so very indifferent, that I would gladly exchange them both for the rags and the unsatisfied hunger of the poorest creature, that looks forward with the hope to a better world, and weeps tears of joy in the midst of penury and distress. What a world is this! How mysteriously governed, and, in appearance, left to itself! One man, having squandered thousands at a gaming-table, finds it convenient to travel; gives his estate to somebody to manage for him; amuses himself a few years in France and Italy; returns, perhaps, wiser than he went, having acquired knowledge, which, but for his follies, he would never have acquired; again makes a splendid figure at home, shines in the senate, governs his country as its minister, is admired for his abilities, and if successful, adored, at least by a party. When he dies he is praised as a demi-god, and his monument records every thing but his vices. The exact contrast of such a picture is to be found in many cottages at Olney. I have no need to describe them, you know the characters I mean: they love God, they trust him, they pray to him in secret, and though he means to reward them openly, the day of recompense is delayed. In the mean time they suffer every thing that infirmity and poverty can inflict upon them. Who would suspect, that has not a spiritual eye to discern it, that the fine gentleman might possibly be one whom his Maker had in abhorrence, and the wretch last mentioned dear to him as the apple of his eye? It is no wonder that the world, who only look at things as they are connected with the present life, find themselves obliged, some of them at least, to doubt a providence, and others absolutely to deny it; when almost all the real virtue there is to be found in it, exists in a state of neglected obscurity, and all the vices cannot exclude them from the privileges of worship and honor. But behind the curtain the matter will be explained; very little, however, to the satisfaction of the great."

CHAPTER X.

Publication of Cowper's second volume of poems. Manner in which it was received by the public. His feelings on the occasion. Great self-abasement. Renewal of his correspondence with Lady Hesketh. Acceptance of her proffered assistance. Her projected visit to Olney. Cowper's pleasing anticipations of its results. Her arrival. Cowper's removal from Olney to Weston. His intimacy with the Throckmortons. Happiness it afforded him.

Cowper's second volume of poems, the publication of which had been delayed much longer than was expected, appeared, at length, in the summer of 1785. His first volume, though it had not met with that success which might have been expected, had nevertheless been extensively circulated, and was spoken of highly by some of the first literary characters of the age. It had therefore raised the expectations of the public, and had thus made way for its successor, which no sooner made its appearance than it was eagerly sought after, and met with a rapid and extensive sale. High as had been the expectations of his friends, they fell far short of what he had accomplished in that brilliant display of real poetical talent everywhere to be found in the Task. The singularity of the title made its first appearance somewhat repulsive: its various and matchless beauties were, however, soon discovered, and it speedily raised the reputation of Cowper to the highest summit of poetic genius, and placed him among the first class of poets.

In a letter to Mr. Newton, he describes his feelings on this occasion in such a manner as proves him to have been influenced by nothing like selfish or ambitious motives; but by principles far more noble and exalted:—"I found your account of what you experienced in your state of maiden authorship very entertaining, because very natural. I suppose no man ever made his first sally from the press without a conviction that all eyes and ears would be engaged to attend him, at least without a thousand anxieties lest they should not. But, however arduous and interesting such an enterprise may be in the first instance, it seems to me that our feelings on the occasion soon become obtuse. I can answer at least for one. Mine are by no means what they were when I published my first volume. I am even so indifferent to the matter, that I can truly assert myself guiltless of the very idea of my book sometimes for whole days together. God knows that my mind, having been occupied more than twelve years in the contemplation of the most distressing subjects, the world, and its opinions of what I write, is become as unimportant to me as the whistling of a bird in a bush. Despair made amusement necessary, and I found poetry the most agreeable amusement. Had I not endeavored to perform my best, it would not have amused me at all. The mere blotting of so much paper would have been but indifferent sport. God gave me grace also to wish that I might not write in vain. Accordingly, I have mingled much truth with some trifles; and such truths as deserved at least to be clad as well

and as handsomely as I could clothe them. If the world approve me not, so much the worse for them, but not for me; I have only endeavored to serve them, and the loss will be their own. And as to their commendations, if I should chance to win them, I feel myself equally invulnerable there. The view that I have had of myself, for many years, has been so truly humiliating, that I think the praises of all mankind could not hurt me. God knows that I speak my present sense of the matter at least most truly, when I say, that the admiration of creatures like myself seems to me a weapon the least dangerous that my worst enemy could employ against me. I am fortified against it by such solidity of real self-abasement, that I deceive myself most egregiously if I do not heartily despise it. Praise belongeth to God; and I seem to myself to covet it no more than I covet divine honors. Could I assuredly hope that God would at last deliver me, I should have reason to thank him for all that I have suffered, were it only for the sake of this single fruit of my affliction—that it has taught me how much more contemptible I am in myself than I ever before suspected, and has reduced my former share of self-knowledge (of which at that time I had a tolerable good opinion) to a mere nullity, in comparison to what I have acquired since. Self is a subject of inscrutable misery and mischief, and can never be studied to so much advantage as in the dark; for as the bright beams of the sun seem to impart a beauty to the most unsightly objects, so the light of God's countenance, vouchsafed to a fallen creature, so sweetens him and softens him for the time, that he seems both to others and to himself, to have nothing selfish or sordid about him. But the heart is a nest of serpents, and will be such while it continues to beat. If God cover the mouth of that nest with his hand, they are hush and snug; but if he withdraw his hand, the whole family lift up their heads and hiss, and are as active and venomous as ever. This I always professed to believe from the time that I had embraced the truth, but I never knew it as I know it now. To what end I have been made to know it as I do, whether for the benefit of others or for my own, or for both, or for neither, will appear hereafter."

While Cowper looked upon his publication with so much indifference, his friends regarded it with very opposite feelings. Its rapid and extensive circulation, not only delighted those who were intimately associated with him, and had been witnesses to the acute anguish of his mind, during his depressive malady, but it also gratified several of his former associates and correspondents, and induced them to renew their communications with the poet. Among these was Lady Hesketh, who was so charmed with productions of his pen, that on her return from abroad, where she had spent several years with her husband, she renewed her correspondence with Cowper, and as she was now a widow and was handsomely provided for, she generously offered to render him any assistance he might want. Cowper's reply to an affectionate letter she wrote him, shows the warmth of his affection towards those whom he loved. He thus writes:—"My dear cousin, it is no new thing for you to give pleasure. But I will venture to say that you do not often give more than you gave me this morning. When I came down to breakfast and found on the table, a letter franked by my uncle, and when opening that frank, I found that it contained a letter from you, I said within myself, this is just as it should be. We are all grown young again, and the days that I thought I should see no more, are actually returned. You perceive, therefore, that you judged well when you conjectured that a line from you would not be disagreeable to me. It could not be otherwise than as in fact it has proved, a most agreeable surprise. For I can truly boast of an affection for you that neither years nor intercepted intercourse have at all abated. I need only recollect how much I valued you once, and with how much cause, immediately to feel a revival of the same value; if that can be said to revive, which at the most has only been dormant for want of employment. But I slander it when I say that it has slept. A thousand times have I recollected a thousand scenes, in which our two selves have formed the whole of the drama, with the greatest pleasure; at times, too, when I had no reason to suppose that I should ever hear from you again. The hours that I have spent with you, were among the pleasantest of my former days, and are therefore chronicled in my mind so deeply as to fear no erasure. You say that you have often heard of me; that puzzles me. I cannot imagine from what quarter; but it is no matter. I must tell you, however, my dear cousin, that your information has been a little defective. That I am happy in my situation is true; I live, and have lived these twenty years, with Mrs. Unwin, to whose affectionate care of me, during the far greater part of that time, it is, under Divine Providence, owing that I live at all. But I do not account myself happy in having been for thirteen of those years in a state of mind that has made all that care and attention necessary; an attention and a care, that have injured her health, and which, had she not been uncommonly supported, must have brought her to the grave. But I will pass to another subject; it would be cruel to particularize only to give pain, neither should I by any means give a sable hue to the first letter of a correspondence so unexpectedly renewed. I must, however tell you, my dear cousin, that dejection of spirits, which I suppose may have prevented many a man from becoming an author, has made me one. I find con-stant employment necessary, and therefore take care to be constantly employed. Manual occupations do not engage the mind sufficiently, as I know by experience, having tried many. But composition, especially of verse, absorbs it wholly. I write, therefore, generally three hours in the morning, and in the evening I transcribe. I read also, but less than I write, for I must have bodily exercise, and therefore never pass a day without it.

"I do not seek new friends, not being altogether sure that I should find them, but have unspeakable pleasure in being beloved by an old one. I hope that our correspondence has now suffered its last interruption, and that we shall go down together to the grave, chattering and chirping as happily as such a scene as this will permit. I am happy that my poems have pleased you. My volume has afforded me no such pleasure at any time, either while I was writing it, or since its publication, as I have derived from yours and my uncle's favorable opinion respecting it. I make certain allowances for partiality, and for that peculiar quickness of taste, with which you both relish what you like; and after all drawbacks upon those accounts duly made, find myself rich in the measure of your approbation that still remains. But above all I honor John Gilpin, since it was he who first encouraged you to write. I made him on purpose to laugh at, and he served his purpose well; but I am now indebted to him for a more valuable acquisition than all the laughter in the world amounts to, the recovery of my intercourse with you, which is to me inestimable. I am glad that I always loved you as I did. It releases me from any occasion to suspect that my present affection for you is indebted for its existence to any selfish considerations. No, I am sure I love you disinterestedly, and for your own sake, because I never thought of you with any other sensations than those of the truest affection, even while I was under the persuasion, that I should

never hear from you again. But with my present feelings superadded to those that I always had for you, I find it no easy matter to do justice to my sensations. I perceive myself in a state of mind, similar to that of the traveller described in Pope's Messiah, who, as he passes through a sandy desert, starts at the sudden and unexpected sound of a waterfall.—Your very generous offer of assistance has placed me in a situation new to me, and in which I feel myself somewhat puzzled how to behave. When I was once asked if I wanted any thing, and given delicately to understand that the inquirer was ready to supply all my occasions, I thankfully and civilly, but positively, declined the favor. I neither suffer nor have suffered such inconveniences, as I had not much rather endure, than come under an obligation to a person who is almost a stranger to me. But to you I answer otherwise. I know you thoroughly, and the liberality of your disposition, and have that consummate confidence in the sincerity of your wish to serve me, that delivers me from all awkward constraint, and from all fear of trespassing by acceptance. To you, therefore, I reply, yes. Whensoever and whatsoever, and in what manner soever, you please, and add moreover, that my affection for the giver is such as will increase to me ten-fold the satisfaction I shall have in receiving. You must not, however, strain any points to your own inconvenience or hurt; there is no need of it; but indulge yourself in communicating (no matter what) that you can spare without missing it, since by so doing you will be sure to add to the comforts of my life, one of the sweetest that I can enjoy—a token and a proof of your affection. At the same time, that I would not grieve you by putting a check upon your bounty, I would be as careful not to abuse it, as if I were a miser, and the question were, not about your money but my own."

The happiest consequences resulted from the renewal of Cowper's correspondence with this accomplished and excellent lady. After an interchange of some of the most interesting letters that were ever written, she proposed at length to pay the sequestered poet a visit at Olney, and made arrangements accordingly.

The following extracts from Cowper's letters to her on this occasion will be read with pleasure, as a faithful record of the delight he anticipated from this interview:—"I have been impatient to tell you, that I am impatient to see you again. Mrs. Unwin partakes with me in all my feelings. Let me assure you, that your kindness in promising us a visit, has charmed us both. I shall see you again, I shall hear your voice. We shall take walks together. I will show you my prospects—the hovel, the alcove, the Ouse, and its banks, every thing that I have described. I anticipate the pleasure of those days not very far distant, and feel a part of it this moment. My dear, I will not let you come till the end of May, or the beginning of June, because before that time my green-house will not be ready to receive us, and it is the only pleasant room belonging to us. When the plants go out, we go in. I line it with nets, and spread the floor with mats; and there you shall sit, with a bed of mignonette at your side, and a hedge of honeysuckles, roses, and jasmine; and I will make you a bouquet of myrtle every day. We now talk of nobody but you—what we will do with you when we get you, where you shall walk, where you shall sleep, in short, every thing that bears the remotest relation to your well-being at Olney occupies all our talking time, which is all that I do not spend at Troy. Mrs. Unwin has already secured for you an apartment, or rather two, just such as we could wish. The house in which you will find them is within thirty yards of our own, and opposite to it. The whole affair is thus commodiously adjusted; and now I have nothing to do but to wish for June; and June, my dear cousin, was never so wished for since June was made. I shall have a thousand things to hear, and a thousand to say, and they will all rush into my mind together, till it will be so crowded with things impatient to be said, that for some time I shall say nothing. But no matter—sooner or later they will all come out. After so long a separation, a separation which of late seemed so likely to last for life, we shall meet each other as alive from the dead; and, for my own part, I can truly say, that I have not a friend in the other world whose resurrection would give me greater pleasure.

"If you will not quote Solomon, my dearest cousin, I will. He says, and as beautifully as truly, 'Hope deferred maketh the heart sick, but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life!' I feel how much reason he had on his side when he made this observation, and I am myself really sick of your delay. Well, the middle of June will not always be a thousand years off; and when it comes, I shall hear you, and see you too; and shall not care a single farthing if you do not touch a pen for a month. From this very morning, 15th May, 1786, I begin to date the last month of our long separation; and confidently, and most comfortably hope, that before the fifteenth of June shall present itself, we shall have seen each other. Is it not so? and will it not be one of the most extraordinary eras of my extraordinary life? A year ago, we neither corresponded, nor expected to meet in this world. But this world is a scene of marvellous events, many of them more marvellous than fiction itself would dare to hazard: (blessed be God!) they are not all of the distressing kind. Now and then, in the course of an existence, whose hue is for the most part sable, a day turns up that makes amends for many sighs, and many subjects of complaint. Such a day shall I account the day of your arrival at Olney. Wherefore is it (canst thou tell me?) that, together with all these delightful sensations, to which the sight of a long absent dear friend gives birth, there is a mixture of something painful, flutterings and tumults, and I know not what accompaniments of our pleasure, that are in fact perfectly foreign from the occasion? Such I feel when I think of our meeting, and such, I suppose, feel you; and the nearer the crisis approaches, the more I am sensible of them. I know beforehand that they will increase with every turn of the wheels that shall convey you to Olney; and when we actually meet, the pleasure, and this unaccountable pain together, will be as much as I shall be able to support. I am utterly at a loss for the cause, and can only resolve it into that appointment, by which it has been foreordained that all human delights shall be qualified and mingled with their contraries. But a fig for them all! Let us resolve to combat with, and to conquer them. They are dreams; they are illusions of the judgment. Some enemy that hates the happiness of human kind, and is ever industrious to dash, if he cannot destroy it, works them in us, and they being so perfectly unreasonable as they are, is a proof of it. Nothing that is such can be the work of a good agent. This I know too by experience, that, like all other illusions, they exist only by force of imagination, are indebted for their prevalence to the absence of their objects, and in a few moments after their appearance cease. So then this is a settled point, and the case stands thus. You will tremble as you draw near to Olney, and so shall I; but we will both recollect that there is no reason why we should, and this recollection will at least have some little effect in our favor. We will likewise both take the comfort of what we know to be true, that the tumult will soon cease, and the pleasure long survive the pain, even as long, I trust,

as we ourselves shall survive it. Assure yourself, my dear cousin, that both for your sake, since you make a point of it, and for my own, I will be as philosophically careful as possible, that these fine nerves of mine shall not be beyond measure agitated when you arrive. In truth, there is a much greater probability that they will be benefited, and greatly, too. Joy of heart, from whatever occasion it may arise, is the best of all nervous medicines; and I should not wonder, if such a turn given to my spirits should have even a lasting effect, of the most advantageous kind, upon them. You must not imagine neither, that I am, on the whole, in any great degree, subject to nervous affections: occasionally I am, and have been these many years, much liable to dejection; but, at intervals, and sometimes for an interval of weeks, no creature would suspect it. For I have not that which commonly is a symptom of such a case, belonging to me: I mean, occasional extraordinary elevation. When I am in the best health, my tide of animal sprightliness flows with great equality, so that I am never, at any time, exalted in proportion as I am sometimes depressed. My depression has a cause, and if that cause were to cease, I should be as cheerful thenceforth, and perhaps for ever, as any man need be.

"Your visit is delayed too long, to my impatience, at least it seems so, who find the spring, backward as it is, too forward, because many of its beauties will have faded before you will have an opportunity to see them. We took our customary walk yesterday, and saw, with regret, the laburnums, syriangas, and guelder roses, some of them blown, and others just upon the point of blowing, and could not help observing, that all these will be gone before Lady Hesketh comes. Still, however, there will be roses, and jasmine, and honey suckles, and shady walks, and cool alcoves, and you will partake them with us. But I want you to have a share of every thing that is delightful here, and cannot bear that the advance of the season should steal away a single pleasure before you come to enjoy it. I will venture to say, that even *you* were never so much expected in your life.

"I regret that I have made your heart ache so often, my dear cousin, with talking about my fits of dejection. Something has happened that has led me to the subject, or I would have mentioned them more sparingly. Do not suppose that I treat you with reserve; there is nothing in which I am concerned that you shall not be made acquainted with. But the tale is too long for a letter: I will only add, for your present satisfaction, that the cause is not exterior, that it is not within the reach of human aid, and that yet I have a hope myself, and Mrs. Unwin a strong persuasion of its removal. I am indeed even now, and have been for a considerable time, sensible of a change for the better, and expect, with good reason, a comfortable lift from you. Guess then, my beloved cousin, with what wishes I look forward to the time of your arrival, from whose coming I promise myself not only pleasure, but peace of mind, at least an additional share of it. At present it is an uncertain and transient guest with me; but the joy with which I shall see, and converse with you, at Olney, may, perhaps, make it an abiding one."

It is seldom that pleasure, anticipated with such warmth of feeling, fully answers our expectations. Human enjoyments almost invariably seem much more valuable in prospect than in possession. Cowper's interview with his cousin, however, was altogether an exception, and proved a source of more real delight to both parties than either of them had expected. As might naturally be supposed, after a separation of three-and-twenty years, they both experienced the full force of those emotions, which Cowper had so well described in his letters, and their first meeting was, indeed, painfully pleasing; every sensation, however, that was in any degree painful, soon subsided, and gave place to such only as were pure and delightful. Mrs. Unwin was pleased with the sweetness of temper, agreeable manners, and cheerful conversation of Lady Hesketh, and her ladyship was no less delighted with the mild, amiable, and affectionate conduct of her new companion; while Cowper's heart was gladdened to have the advantage of daily intercourse with another highly cultivated mind.

The happy effect this change had upon Cowper's spirits will be seen by the following extracts from his correspondence:—"My dear cousin's arrival, as it could not fail to do, has made us happier than we ever were at Olney. Her great kindness, in giving us her company, is a cordial that I shall feel the effect of, not only while she is here, but while I live. She has been with us a fortnight. She pleases every body, and is, in her turn, pleased with every thing she finds here; is always cheerful and good tempered; and knows no pleasure equal to that of communicating pleasure to us, and to all around her. The disposition in her is the more comfortable, because it is not the humor of the day, a sudden flash of benevolence and goodness, occasioned merely by a change of scene, but it is her natural turn, and has governed all her conduct ever since I knew her first. We are consequently happy in her society, and shall be happier still to have you partake with us in our joy. I am fond of the sound of bells, but was never more pleased with those of Olney than when they rang her into her new habitation. She is, as she ever was, my pride and my joy; and I am delighted with every thing that means to do her honor. Her first appearance was too much for me; my spirits, instead of being gently raised, broke down with me, under the pressure of too much joy, and left me flat, or rather melancholy, throughout the day, to a degree that was mortifying to myself, and alarming to her. But I have made amends for this torture since; and, in point of cheerfulness, have far exceeded her expectations, for she knew that sable had been my suit for many years. By her help we get change of air and of scene, though still resident at Olney; and by her means, have intercourse with some families in this country, with whom, but for her, we could never have been acquainted. Her presence here would at any time, even in her happiest days, have been a comfort to me; but in the present day I am doubly sensible of its value. She leaves nothing unsaid, nothing undone, that she thinks will be conducive to our well-being; and so far as she is concerned, I have nothing to wish, but that I could believe her sent hither in mercy to myself;—then I should be thankful."

Lady Hesketh had not long been at Olney before she became dissatisfied with the poet's residence. She thought it a situation altogether unsuitable for a person subject to depression. Cowper himself had often entertained the same opinion respecting it: and both he and Mrs. Unwin had frequently wished for a change, and had, indeed, been looking out for a house more agreeable to their taste. At that time a very commodious cottage, pleasantly situated in the village of Weston Underwood, a mile and a half distant from Olney, belonging to Sir John Throckmorton, was unoccupied. It occurred to Cowper, that this would be a very agreeable summer residence for his cousin; and on his mentioning it to her, she immediately engaged it, not for herself only, but for the future residence of the poet and his amiable companion, with whom she had now made up her mind to become a frequent, if not a constant associate. The following extracts

will best describe Cowper's feelings on this occasion:—"I shall now communicate news that will give you pleasure. When you first contemplated the front of our abode, you were shocked. In your eyes it had the appearance of a prison, and you sighed at the thought that your mother lived in it. Your view of it was not only just, but prophetic. It had not only the aspect of a place built for the purposes of incarceration, but has actually served that purpose, through a long, long period, that we have been the prisoners; but a jail delivery is at hand. The bolts and bars are to be loosed, and we shall escape. A very different mansion, both in point of appearance and accommodation, expects us; and the expense of living in it will not be much greater than we are subjected to in this. It is situated at Weston, one of the prettiest villages in England, and belongs to Mr. Throckmorton, afterwards Sir John Throckmorton. We all three dine with him to-day by invitation, and shall survey it in the afternoon, point out the necessary repairs, and finally adjust the treaty. I have my cousin's promise that she will never let another year pass without a visit to us, and the house is large enough to take us, and our suite, and her also, with as many of her's as she shall choose to bring. The change will, I hope, prove advantageous, both to your mother and to me, in all respects. Here we have no neighborhood; there we shall have very agreeable neighbors in the Throckmortons. Here we have a bad air in the winter, impregnated with the fishy-smelling fumes of the marsh miasma; there we shall breathe in an atmosphere untainted. Here we are confined from September to March, and sometimes longer; there we shall be upon the very verge of pleasure grounds, upon which we can always ramble, and shall not wade through almost impassable dirt to get at them. Both your mother's constitution and mine have suffered materially by such close and long confinement; and it is high time, unless we intend to retreat into the grave, that we should seek out a more wholesome residence. So far is well; the rest is left to Heaven."

To his friend Mr. Newton, he thus writes:—"You have heard of our intended removal. The house that is to receive us is in a state of preparation, and when finished, will be both smarter and more commodious than our present abode. But the circumstance that recommends it chiefly is its situation. Long confinement in the winter, and indeed, for the most part in autumn too, has hurt us both. A gravel-walk, thirty yards long, affords but indifferent scope to the locomotive faculty; yet it is all that we have had to move in for eight months in the year, during thirteen years that I have been a prisoner. Had I been confined in the Tower, the battlements of it would have furnished me with a larger space. You say well, that there was a time when I was happy at Olney; and I am now as happy at Olney, as I expect to be any where, without the presence of God. Change of situation is with me no otherwise an object, than as both Mrs. Unwin's health and my own happen to be concerned in it. We are both I believe partly indebted for our respective maladies, to an atmosphere encumbered with raw vapors, issuing from flooded meadows, and we have perhaps fared the worse for sitting so often, and sometimes for several successive months, over a cellar filled with water. These ills we shall escape in the uplands; and as we may reasonably hope, of course, their consequences. But as for happiness, he that once had communion with his Maker, must be more frantic than ever I was yet, if he can dream of finding it at a distance from him. I no more expect happiness at Weston than here, or than I should expect it in company with felons and outlaws in the hold of a ballast-lighter. Animal spirits, however, have their value, and are especially desirable to him who is condemned to carry a burden which at any rate will tire him, but which without their aid, cannot fail to crush him."

On the 15th November, 1786, Cowper entered upon his new abode. The following extracts from his letters describe his sensations on the occasion:—"There are some things that do not exactly shorten the life of man, yet seem to do so, and frequent removals from place to place are of that number. For my own part, at least, I am apt to think, if I had been more stationary, I should seem to myself to have lived longer. My many changes of habitation have divided my time into many short periods; and when I look back upon them, they appear only as the stages of a day's journey, the first of which is at no great distance from the last. I lived longer at Olney than any where. There indeed I lived till mouldering walls and a tottering house warned me to depart. I have accordingly taken the hint, and two days since arrived, or rather took up my abode, at Weston. You perhaps have never made the experiment, but I can assure you that the confusion that attends a transmigration of this kind is infinite, and has a terrible effect in deranging the intellect. When God speaks to a chaos, it becomes a scene of order and harmony in a moment; but when his creatures have thrown one house into confusion by leaving it, and another by tumbling themselves and their goods into it, not less than many days' labor and contrivance are necessary to give them their proper places. And it belongs to furniture of all kinds, however convenient it may be in its place, to be a nuisance out of it. We find ourselves here in a comfortable house. Such it is in itself; and my cousin, who has spared no expense in dressing it up for us, has made it a genteel one. Such, at least, it will be, when its contents are a little harmonized. She left us on Tuesday, and on Wednesday, Mrs. Unwin and I took possession of our new abode. I could not help giving a last look to my old prison, and its precincts; and though I cannot easily account for it, having been miserable there so many years, felt something like a heart-ache, when I took my leave of a scene, that certainly in itself had nothing to engage affection. But I recollected that I had once been happy there, and could not, without tears in my eyes, bid adieu to a place in which God had so often found me. The human mind is a great mystery; mine, at least, appears to be such upon this occasion. I found that I not only had a tenderness for that ruinous abode, because it had once known me happy in the presence of God, but that even the distress I had there suffered, for so long a time, on account of his absence, had endeared it to me as much. I was weary of every object, had long wished for a change, yet could not take leave without a pang at parting. What consequences are to attend our removal, God only knows. I know well that it is not in the power of situation to effect a cure of melancholy like mine. The change, however, has been entirely a providential one; for much as I wished it, I never uttered that wish, except to Mrs. Unwin. When I learned that the house was to be let, and had seen it, I had a strong desire that Lady Hesketh should take it for herself, if she should happen to like the country. That desire, indeed, is not exactly fulfilled, and yet, upon the whole, is exceeded. We are the tenants; but she assures us that we shall often have her for a guest, and here is room enough for us all. You, I hope, my dear friend, and Mrs. Newton, will want no assurances to convince you that you will always be received here with the sincerest welcome; more welcome than you have been you cannot be, but better accommodated you may and will be."

CHAPTER XI.

Extracts from his correspondence. Description of the deep seriousness that generally pervaded his mind. His remarks to justify his removal from Olney. Vindicates himself and Mrs. Unwin from unjust aspersions. Reasons for undertaking the translation of Homer. His opinion of Pope's. Unremitting attention to his own. Immense pains he bestowed upon it. His readiness to avail himself of the assistance of others. Vexation he experienced from a multiplicity of critics. Just remarks upon criticism. Determination to persevere in his work. Justifies himself for undertaking it. Pleasure he took in relieving the poor. Renewal of his correspondence with General Cowper and the Rev. Dr. Bagot. Consolatory letter to the latter.

The extracts we have already made from Cowper's correspondence prove, unquestionably, that the leading bias of his mind was towards the all-important concerns of religion. As an exhibition, however, of the state of his mind in this respect, at least, up to the close of 1786, the period of his removal to Weston, we think the following extracts cannot fail to be interesting. To Mr. Newton he writes as follows:—"Those who enjoy the means of grace, and know how to use them well, will thrive any where; others no where. More than a few, who were formerly ornaments of this garden, which you once watered, here flourished, and have seemed to wither, and become, as the apostle James strongly expresses it—twice dead—plucked up by the roots; others trasplanted into a soil, apparently less favorable to their growth, either find the exchange an advantage, or at least, are not injured by it. Of myself, who had once both leaves and fruit, but who have now neither, I say nothing, or only this—that when I am overwhelmed with despair, I repine at my barrenness, and I think it hard to be thus blighted; but when a glimpse of hope breaks in upon me, I am then contented to be the sapless thing I am, knowing that he who has commanded me to wither, can command me to flourish again when he pleases. My experiences, however, of this latter kind, are rare and transient. The light that reaches me cannot be compared either to that of the sun, or of the moon; it is a flash in a dark night, during which the heavens seem opened only to shut again. I should be happy (and when I say this, I mean to be understood in the fullest and most emphatical sense of the word) if my frame of mind were such as to permit me to study the important truths of religion. But Adam's approach to the tree of life, after he had sinned, was not more effectually prohibited by the flaming sword that turned every way, than mine to its great Antitype has been now almost these thirteen years, a short interval of three or four days, which passed about this time twelvemonth, alone excepted. For what reason I am thus long excluded, if I am ever again to be admitted, is known to God only. I can say but this, that if he is still my father, his paternal severity has, toward me, been such as to give me reason to account it unexampled. For though others have suffered desertion, yet few, I believe, for so long a time, and perhaps none a desertion accompanied with such experience. But they have this belonging to them: that as they are not fit for a recital, being made up merely of infernal ingredients, so neither are they susceptible of it, for I know no language in which they could be expressed. They are as truly things which it is not possible for man to utter, as those were which Paul heard and saw in the third heaven. If the ladder of Christian experience reaches, as I suppose it does, to the very presence of God, it has nevertheless its foot in the abyss. And if Paul stood, as no doubt he did, on the topmost stave of it, I have been standing, and still stand, on the lowest, in this thirteenth year that has passed since I descended. In such a situation of mind, encompassed by the midnight of absolute despair, and a thousand times filled with unspeakable horror, I first commenced an author. Distress drove me to it; and the impossibility of existing without some employment, still recommends it. I am not, indeed, so perfectly hopeless as I was, but I am equally in need of an occupation, being often as much, and sometimes even more, worried than ever. I cannot amuse myself as I once could with carpenters' or with gardeners' tools, or with squirrels and guinea-pigs. At that time I was a child; but since it has pleased God, whatever else he withholds from me, to restore to me a man's mind, I have put away childish things. Thus far, therefore, it is plain that I have not chosen, or prescribed to myself, my own way, but have been providentially led to it; perhaps I might say, with equal propriety, compelled and scourged into it: for certainly could I have made my choice, or were I permitted to make it even now, those hours which I spend in poetry I would spend with God. But it is evidently his will that I should spend them as I do, because every other way of employing them he himself continues to make impossible. The dealings of God with me are to myself utterly unintelligible. I have never met, either in books, or in conversation, with an experience at all similar to my own. More than twelve months have now passed since I began to hope, that having walked the whole breadth of the bottom of this Red Sea, I was beginning to climb the opposite shore, and I prepared to sing the song of Moses. But I have been disappointed; those hopes have been blasted; those comforts have been wrested from me. I could not be so duped even by the arch-enemy himself as to be made to question the divine nature of them, but I have been made to believe (which you will say is being duped still more) that God gave them to me in derision, and took them away in vengeance. Such, however, is, and has been my persuasion many a long day; and when I shall think on this subject more comfortably, or as you will be inclined to tell me, more rationally and scripturally, I know not. In the mean time I embrace, with alacrity, every alleviation of my case, and with the more alacrity, because, whatever proves a relief of my distress is a cordial to Mrs. Unwin, whose sympathy with me, through the whole of it, has been such, that despair excepted, her burthen has been as heavy as mine."

Some of his friends, and Mr. Newton among the rest, on being apprized of his intended removal from Olney, expressed apprehensions that it would introduce him to company, uncongenial to his taste, if not detrimental to his piety. Adverting to these objections, he thus writes to his esteemed correspondent: "If in the course of such an occupation as I have been driven to by despair, or by the inevitable consequence of it, either my former connections are revived, or new ones occur, these things are as much a part of the dispensation of Providence as the leading points themselves. If his purposes in thus directing me are gracious, he will take care to prove them such in the issue; and, in the mean time, will preserve me (for he is able to do that, in one condition of life as well as in another) from all mistakes that might prove pernicious to myself, or give reasonable offence to others. I can say it, as truly as it was ever spoken, Here I am; let him do with me as seemeth to him good. At present, however, I have no connections, at which either you, I trust, or any who love me, and wish me well, have occasion to conceive alarm. Much kindness indeed I have experienced at the hands of several, some of them near relations, others not related to me at all, but I do not know that there is among them a single person from whom I am likely to catch contamination. I can say of them all, with more truth than Jacob uttered, when he

called kid venison, 'The Lord thy God brought them unto me.' I could show you among them two men, whose lives, though they have but little of what we call evangelical light, are ornaments to a Christian country, men who fear God more than some who profess to love him. But I will not particularize further on such a subject. Be they what they may, our situations are so distant, and we are likely to meet so seldom, that were they, as they are not, persons even of exceptionable manners, their manners would have little to do with me. We correspond, at present, only on the subject of what passed at Troy three thousand years ago; and they are matters that, if they can do no good, will at least hurt nobody."

"Your letter to Mrs. Unwin concerning our conduct, and the offence taken at it in our neighborhood, gave us both a great deal of concern, and she is still deeply affected by it. Of this you may assure yourself, that if our friends in London have been grieved, it is because they have been misinformed, which is the more probable, because the bearers of intelligence hence to London are not always very scrupulous concerning the truth of their reports; and that if any of our serious neighbors have been astonished, they have been so without the slightest occasion. Poor people are never well employed even when they judge one another; but when they undertake to scan the motives, and estimate the behavior of those whom Providence has raised a little above them, they are utterly out of their province and their depth. They often see us get into Lady Hesketh's carriage, and rather uncharitably suppose that it always carries us into a scene of dissipation, which, in fact, it never does. We visit, indeed, at Mr. Throckmorton's, and at Gayhurst; rarely, however, at the latter, on account of the greater distance; frequently, though not very frequently, at Weston, both because it is nearer, and because our business in the house that is making ready for our reception, often calls us that way. What good we can get or can do in these visits, is another question, which they, I am sure, are not qualified to solve. Of this we are both sure, that under the guidance of Providence we have formed these connections; that we should have hurt the Christian cause rather than have served it, by a prudish abstinence from them; and that St. Paul himself, conducted to them as we have been, would have found it expedient to have done as we have done. It is always impossible to conjecture to much purpose, from the beginnings of a providential event, how it will terminate. If we have neither received nor communicated any spiritual good at present, while conversant with our new acquaintance, at least no harm has befallen on either side; and it were too hazardous an assertion, even for our censorious neighbors to make, that the cause of the gospel can never be served in any of our future interviews with them, because it does not appear to have been served at present. In the mean time, I speak a strict truth as in the sight of God, when I say that we are neither of us at all more addicted to gadding than heretofore. We both naturally love seclusion from company, and never go into it without putting a force upon our own dispositions; at the same time I will confess, and you will easily conceive, that the melancholy, incident to such close confinement as we have so long endured, finds itself a little relieved by such amusements as a society so innocent affords. You may look round the Christian world, and find few, I believe, of our station, who have so little intercourse as we with the world, that is not Christian. We place all the uneasiness that you have felt for us on the subject, to the account of that cordial friendship of which you have long given us a proof. But you may be assured, that notwithstanding all the rumors to the contrary, we are exactly what we were when you saw us last:—I, miserable on account of God's departure from me, which I believe to be final; and she seeking his return to me in the path of duty, and by continual prayer."

After the publication of Cowper's second volume of poems, and indeed, for some considerable time before its actual appearance, he was diligently engaged in producing a new translation of Homer's unrivalled poems. His reasons for undertaking a work of so great magnitude, and that required such immense labor; and the spirited manner with which he brought it to a close, shall be related as nearly as possible in his own words. Writing to Mr. Newton, he thus describes the commencement of this great undertaking:—"I am employed in writing a narrative, but not so useful as that you have just published. Employment, however, with the pen, is through habit become essential to my well-being; and to produce always original poems, especially of considerable length, is not so easy. For some weeks after I had finished the Task, and sent away the last sheet corrected, I was through necessity idle, and suffered not a little in my spirits for being so. One day, being in such distress of mind as was hardly supportable, I took up the Iliad; and merely to direct attention, and with no more preconception of what I was then entering upon, than I have at this moment of what I shall be doing this day twenty years hence, translated the first twelve lines of it. The same necessity pressed me again, I had recourse to the same expedient, and translated more. Every day bringing its occasion for employment with it, every day consequently added something to the work; till at last I began to reflect thus:—The Iliad and the Odyssey together consist of about forty thousand verses. To translate these forty thousand verses will furnish me with occupation for a considerable time. I have already made some progress, and find it a most agreeable amusement. Homer, in point of purity, is a most blameless writer, and though he was not an enlightened man, has interspersed many great and valuable truths throughout both his poems. In short, he is in all respects a most venerable old gentleman, by an acquaintance with whom no man can disgrace himself; the literati are all agreed, to a man, that although Pope has given us two pretty poems, under Homer's title, there is not to be found in them the least portion of Homer's spirit, nor the least resemblance of his manner. I will try, therefore, whether I cannot copy him more happily myself. I have at least the advantage of Pope's faults and failings, which, like so many beacons upon a dangerous coast, will serve me to steer by, and will make my chance for success more probable. These, and many other considerations, but especially a mind that abhorred a vacuum as its chief bane, impelled me so effectually to the work, that ere long I mean to publish proposals for a subscription of it, having advanced so far as to be warranted in doing so."

In another letter to the same correspondent, the following just and critical remarks on Pope's translation occur:—"Your sentiments of Pope's Homer agree perfectly with those of every competent judge with whom I have at any time conversed about it. I never saw a copy so unlike the original. There is not, I believe, in all the world, to be found an uninspired poem so simple as are both of those of Homer; nor in all the world a poem more bedizened with ornaments than Pope's translation of them. Accordingly, the sublime of Homer in the hands of Pope, becomes bloated and tumid, and his description tawdry. Neither had Pope the faintest conception of those exquisite discriminations of character for which Homer is so remarkable. All

his persons, and equally upon all occasions, speak in an inflated and strutting phraseology, as Pope has managed them; although in the original, the dignity of their utterance, even when they are most majestic, consists principally in the simplicity of their sentiments and of their language. Another censure I must pass upon our Anglo-Grecian, out of many that obtrude themselves upon me, but for which I have now neither time nor room to spare, which is, that with all his great abilities, he was defective in his feelings, to a degree that some passages in his own poems make it difficult to account for. No writer is more pathetic than Homer, because none more natural; and because none less natural than Pope, in his version of Homer, therefore, than he, none less pathetic. One of the great faults of Pope's translation is, that it is licentious. To publish, therefore, a translation that should be at all chargeable with the same fault, would be useless. Whatever will be said of mine, when it does appear, it shall never be said that it is not faithful. I thank you heartily both for your wishes and prayers, that should a disappointment occur, I may not be too much hurt by it. Strange as it may seem to say it, and unwilling as I should be to say it to any person less candid than yourself, I will nevertheless say that I have not entered upon this work, unconnected as it must needs appear with the cause of God, without the direction of his providence, nor have I been altogether unassisted by him in the performance of it. Time will show to what it ultimately tends. I am inclined to think that it has a tendency to which I myself am at present a perfect stranger. Be that as it may, he knows my frame, and will consider that I am dust, and dust too that has been so trampled under foot, and beaten, that a storm less violent than an unsuccessful issue of such a business might occasion, would be sufficient to blow me quite away. As I know not to what end this my present occupation may finally lead, so neither did I know when I wrote it, or at all suspect, one valuable end, at least, that was to be answered by the Task. It has pleased God to prosper it; and being composed in blank verse, it is likely to prove as seasonable an introduction to a blank verse Homer, by the same hand, as any that could have been devised; yet when I wrote the last line of the Task, I as little suspected that I should ever engage in a version of the old Asiatic tale, as you do now."

Having undertaken a work that required so much labor, he bestowed upon it the utmost pains, and allowed nothing to divert his attention from it. In his correspondence the following remarks occur:—"The little time that I can devote to any other purpose than that of poetry, is, as you may suppose, stolen. Homer is urgent; much is done, and much still remains undone, and no school-boy is more attentive to the performance of his daily task than I am.—In truth, my time is very much occupied; and the more so, because I not only have a long and laborious work in hand—for such it would prove at any rate—but because I make it a point to bestow my utmost attention to it, and to give it all the finishing that the most scrupulous accuracy can command. As soon as breakfast is over I retire to my nutshell of a summer-house, which is my verse manufactory, and here I abide seldom less than three hours, and not often more. In the afternoon I return to it again; and all the day light that follows, except what is sometimes devoted to a walk, is given to Homer. It is well for me, that a course which is now become necessary, is so much my choice. Assure yourself, therefore, that when at any time it happens that I am in arrears in my correspondence with you, neither neglect nor idleness is the cause. I have a daily occupation of forty lines to translate, a task which I never excuse myself from, when it is possible to perform it. Equally sedulous I am in the matter of transcribing, so that between both, my mornings and evenings are, for the most part, completely engaged. Add to this, that though my spirits are seldom so bad but I can write verse, they are often at so low an ebb as to make the production of a letter impossible. I am now in the twentieth book of Homer, and shall assuredly proceed, because the farther I go the more I find myself justified in the undertaking; and in due time, if I live, shall assuredly publish. In the whole I shall have composed about forty thousand verses, about which forty thousand verses, I shall have taken great pains, on no occasion suffering a slovenly line to escape me. I leave you to guess, therefore, whether, such a labor once achieved, I shall not determine to turn it to some account, and to gain myself profit by it if I can; if not, at least some credit, for my reward. Till I had made such a progress in my present undertaking as to put it out of all doubt, that, if I lived, I should proceed in, and finish it, I kept the matter to myself. It would have done me little honor to have told my friends, that I had an arduous enterprise in hand, if afterwards I must have told them that I had dropped it. Knowing it to have been universally the opinion of the literati, ever since they have allowed themselves to consider the matter coolly, that a translation, properly so called, of Homer, is, notwithstanding what Pope has done, a desideratum in the English language; it struck me that an attempt to supply the deficiency would be an honorable one, and having made myself, in former years, somewhat critically, master of the original, I was by this double consideration induced to make the attempt myself. I am now translating into blank verse the last book of the Iliad, and mean to publish by subscription. I wish that all English readers had an unsophisticated and unadulterated taste, and could relish real simplicity. But I am well aware, that in this respect, I am under a disadvantage, and that many, especially many ladies, missing many pretty terms of expression that they have admired in Pope, will account my translation, in those particulars, defective. But, I comfort myself with the thought that in reality it is no defect; on the contrary, that the want of all such embellishments as do not belong to the original, will be one of its principal merits, with persons really capable of relishing Homer. He is the best poet that ever lived, for many reasons, but for none more than that majestic plainness that distinguishes him from all others. As an accomplished person moves gracefully without thinking of it, in like manner, the dignity of Homer seems to have cost him no labor. It was natural to him to say great things, and to say them well, and little ornaments were beneath his notice."

The following extract will show that no person ever appeared before the public in a work of any literary importance, and more correct views of its legitimate claims, under such circumstances:—"I thank you for your friendly hints and precautions, and shall not fail to give them the guidance of my pen. I respect the public, and I respect myself, and had rather want bread than expose myself wantonly to the condemnation of either. I hate the affectation so frequently found in authors, of negligence and slovenliness, and in the present case am sensible how necessary it is to shun them, when I undertake the vast and invidious labor of doing better than Pope has done before me. I thank you for all that you have said and done in my cause, and beforehand for all that you shall say and do hereafter. I am sure that there will be no deficiency on your part. On my own part I assure you that no pains shall be wanted to make the work as complete as possible.

I am now in a scene of perfect tranquillity and the profoundest silence, kicking up the dust of heroic narrative and besieging Troy again. I told you that I had almost finished the translation of the Iliad, and I verily thought so. But I was never more mistaken. By the time when I had reached the end of the poem, the first book of my version was a twelvemonth old. When I came to consider it, after having laid it by so long, it did not satisfy me: I set myself to mend it, and did so. But still it appeared to me improvable, and that nothing would so effectually secure that point as to give the whole book a new translation. With the exception of a very few lines, I have so done, and was never in my life so convinced of the soundness of Horace's advice to publish nothing in haste; so much advantage have I derived from doing that twice which I thought I had accomplished notably at once. He, indeed, recommends nine years' imprisonment of your verses before you send them abroad; but the ninth part of that time is, I believe, as much as there is need of to open a man's eyes upon his own defects, and to secure him from the danger of premature self-approbation. Neither ought it to be forgotten, that nine years make so wide an interval between the cup and the lip, that a thousand things may fall out between. New engagements may occur, which may make the finishing of that which a poet has begun impossible. In nine years he may rise into a situation, or he may sink into one, utterly incompatible with his purpose. His constitution may break in nine years, and sickness may disqualify him for improving what he enterprised in the days of his health. His inclination may change, and he may find some other employment more agreeable; or another poet may enter upon the same work, and get the start of him. Therefore, my friend Horace, though I acknowledge your principle to be good, I must confess the practice you would ground upon it is carried to an extreme. The rigor that I exercised upon the first book, I intend to exercise upon all that follow, and have now actually advanced into the middle of the seventh, nowhere admitting more than one line in fifty of the first translation. You must not imagine that I had been careless and hasty in the first instance. In truth, I had not; but, in rendering so excellent a poet as Homer into our language, there are so many points to be attended to, both in respect of language and numbers, that a first attempt must be fortunate indeed if it does not call aloud for a second. You saw the specimen, and you saw (I am sure) one great fault in it; I mean the harshness of some of the elisions. I do not altogether take the blame of these to myself, for into some of them I have been absolutely driven and hunted by a series of reiterated objections, made by a critical friend, whose scruples and delicacies teazed me almost out of all patience."

With a view to make his translation as perfect as possible, Cowper, before he committed it to the press, availed himself of the assistance of several eminent critics, from some of whom he derived considerable assistance, which, at every convenient opportunity, he very readily and gratefully acknowledged. The remarks of others, however, to whose notice he had been persuaded to submit parts of his manuscript, were so frivolous and perfectly hypercritical, as to occasion him considerable vexation. Of this, the closing remarks of the last, and the whole of the following extract will afford ample proof:—"The vexation and perplexity that attend a multiplicity of criticisms by various hands, many of which are sure to be futile, many of them unfounded, and some of them contradictory to others, is inconceivable, except by the author, whose ill-fated work happens to be the subject of them. This also appears to me self-evident, that if a work have passed under the review of one man of taste and learning, and have had the good fortune to please him, his approbation gives security for that of all others qualified like himself. I speak thus, after having just escaped such a storm of trouble, occasioned by endless remarks, hints, suggestions, and objections, as drove me almost to despair, and to the very verge of a resolution to drop my undertaking for ever. With infinite difficulty, I at last sifted the chaff from the wheat, availed myself of what appeared to me just, and rejected the rest, but not till the labor and anxiety had nearly undone all that one judicious critic had been doing for me. I assure you I can safely say, that vanity and self-importance had nothing to do in all this distress that I suffered. It was merely the effect of an alarm that I could not help taking, when I compared the great trouble I had with a few lines only thus handled, with that which I foresaw such handling of the whole must necessarily give me. I felt beforehand that my constitution would not bear it. Though Johnson's friend has teased me sadly, I verily believe that I shall have no more such cause to complain of *him*. We now understand one another; and I firmly believe that I might have gone the world through before I had found his equal in an accurate and familiar acquaintance with the original. Though he is a foreigner, he has a perfect knowledge of the English language, and can consequently appreciate its beauties, as well as discover its defects.

"The animadversions of the critic you sent me, hurt me more than they would have done, had they come from a person from whom I might have expected such treatment. In part they appeared to me unjust, and in part ill-natured; and, the man himself being an oracle in almost every body's account, I apprehended that he had done me much mischief. Why he says that the translation is far from exact is best known to himself. For I know it to be as exact as is compatible with poetry; and prose translations of Homer are not wanted. The world has one already. I am greatly pleased with the amendments of a friend, to whom I sent a specimen, which he has returned amended with so much taste and candor, and accompanied with so many expressions of kindness, that it quite charmed me. He has chiefly altered the lines encumbered with elisions; and I will just take this opportunity to tell you, because I know you to be as much interested in what I write as myself, that some of the most offensive of these elisions were occasioned by mere criticism. I was fairly hunted into them by vexatious objections, made without end by —— and his friends, and altered, and altered, till at last I scarcely cared how I altered. I am not naturally insensible, and the sensibilities I had by nature have been wonderfully enhanced by a long series of shocks, given to a frame of nerves that was never very athletic. I feel accordingly, whether painful or pleasant, in the extreme; am easily elevated, and easily cast down. The power of a critic freezes my poetical powers, and discourages me to such a degree, that makes me ashamed of my own weakness. Yet I presently recover my confidence again, especially when I have every reason to believe, as in the case you refer to, that a critic's censures are harsh and unreasonable, and arise more from his own wounded and mortified feelings, than from any defect in the work itself."

Notwithstanding the irritation produced in the mind of the poet by the trifling amendments and vexatious criticisms of some whom he had been persuaded to consult, he nevertheless persevered in the translation, with undiminished activity, and gave abundant proof that he possessed that real greatness of mind which alone could enable him to undertake

and accomplish a work of so great magnitude. To Lady Hesketh he thus discloses the state of his mind in this respect:—"Your anxious wishes for my success delight me, and you may rest assured that I have all the ambition on the subject that you can wish me to feel. I more than admire my author. I often stand astonished at his beauties. I am for ever amused with the translation of him, and I have received a thousand encouragements: these are all so many happy omens, that I hope will be verified by the event. I am not ashamed to confess that, having commenced an author, I am most abundantly desirous to succeed as such. I have (what perhaps you little suspect me of) in my nature an infinite share of ambition. But with it I have, at the same time, as you well know, an equal share of diffidence. To this combination of opposite qualities it has been owing that, till lately, I stole through life without undertaking any thing, yet always wishing to distinguish myself. At last I ventured, ventured too in the only path that, at so late a period, was yet open to me, and am determined, if God have not determined otherwise, to work my way through the obscurity that has been so long my portion, into notice. Every thing, therefore, that seems to threaten this my favorite purpose, with disappointment, affects me severely. I suppose that all ambitious minds are in the same predicament. He who seeks distinction must be sensible of disapprobation, exactly in the same proportion as he desires applause. I have thus, my dear cousin, unfolded my heart to you in this particular, without a speck of dissimulation. Some people, and good people too, would blame me, but you will not; and they, I think, would blame without just cause. We certainly do not honor God when we bury, or when we neglect to improve, as far as we can, whatever talent he may have bestowed upon us, whether it be little or much. In natural things, as well as spiritual, it is a never-failing truth, that to him who *hath*, (that is, to him who employs what he hath, diligently, and so as to increase it,) more shall be given. Set me down, therefore, my dear cousin, for an industrious rhymer, so long as I shall have ability. For in this only way is it possible for me, so far as I can see, either to honor God, or even to serve myself."

In reply to the apprehensions expressed by some of his correspondents, that the confinement and close application which this work necessarily required, would prove injurious to his health, and be likely to increase his depression, he made the following remarks:—"You may well wonder at my courage, who have undertaken a work of such enormous length; you would wonder more if you knew I translated the whole Iliad, with no other help than a Clavis. But I have since equipped myself for this immense journey, and am revising the work in company with a good commentator. I thank you for the solicitude you express on the subject of my present studies. The work is undoubtedly long and laborious, but it has an end, and proceeding leisurely, with a due attention to air and exercise, it is possible that I may live to finish it. Assure yourself of one thing, that though to a bystander it may seem an occupation surpassing the powers of a constitution never very athletic, and, at present, not a little the worse for wear, I can invent for myself no employment that does not exhaust my spirits more. I will not pretend to account for this; I will only say that it is not the language of predilection for a favorite amusement, but that the fact is really so. I have ever found that those plaything avocations which one may execute almost without any attention, fatigue me, and wear me away, while such as engage me much, and attach me closely, are rather serviceable to me than otherwise."

During the whole of Cowper's residence at Olney, he retained the same sentiments of affectionate sympathy for the sufferings of the poor that he had evinced when he first came among them. And though he had experienced some painful proofs of their insensibility, ingratitude, and unkindness, yet his heart had often been made to rejoice with those whom either his own liberality or the liberality of his friends had enabled him to relieve. Aware that it afforded him so much pleasure to be employed in communicating happiness to others, his friends often placed at his disposal such things as they felt inclined to contribute. The following interesting extract from a letter to Mr. Unwin, proves how highly he was gratified in being thus benevolently employed:—"I have thought with pleasure of the summer that you have had in your heart, while you have been employed in softening the severity of winter, in behalf of so many who must otherwise have been exposed to it. You never said a better thing in your life than when you assured Mr. — of the expedience of a gift of bedding to the poor at Olney. There is no one article of this world's comforts, with which, as Falstaff says, they are so heinously unprovided. When a poor woman, and an honest one, whom we know well, carried home two pair of blankets, a pair for herself and husband, and a pair for her six children, that you kindly placed at my disposal, as soon as the children saw them, they jumped out of their straw, caught them in their arms, kissed them, blessed them, and danced for joy. An old woman, a very old one, the first night that she found herself so comfortably covered, could not sleep a wink, being kept awake by the contrary emotions of transport on the one hand, and the fear of not being thankful enough on the other."

After the publication of Cowper's second volume, and previous to his removal from Olney, he had renewed his correspondence with some relatives and friends with whom he had formerly been on terms of intimacy, but who seemed almost to have forgotten him, until the popularity of his publications arrested their attention. Among these were General Cowper and Rev. Walter Bagot. Cowper's letters to the latter prove that his attachment to him was not slight and superficial, but deep and fervent. In February, 1786, it pleased God to deprive Mr. Bagot of his amiable and accomplished wife, who was respected and beloved by all who knew her. On this melancholy occasion Cowper wrote to him as follows—"Alas! alas! my dear, dear friend, may God himself comfort you! I will not be so absurd as to attempt it. By the close of your letter, it should seem that in this hour of great trial, he withholds not his consolations from you. I know by experience that they are neither few nor small; and though I feel for you as I never felt for man before, yet do I sincerely rejoice in this, that, whereas there is but one comforter in the universe, under afflictions such as yours, you both know Him, and know where to seek Him. I thought you a man the most happily mated that I had ever seen, and had great pleasure in your felicity. Pardon me, if now I feel a wish, that, short as my acquaintance with her was, I had never seen her; I should then have mourned with you, but not as I do now. Mrs. Unwin also sympathizes with you most sincerely, and you neither are, nor will be soon forgotten, in such prayers as we can make. I will not detain you longer now, my poor afflicted friend, than to commit you to the mercy of God, and to bid you a sorrowful adieu. May God be with you my friend, and give you a just measure of submission to his will, the most effectual remedy for the evils of this changing scene. I doubt not that he has granted you this blessing already, and may he still continue it."

CHAPTER XII.

Pleasure he enjoyed in his new residence. Sudden death of Mrs. Unwin's son. Cowper's distress on the occasion. Experiences a severe attack of illness. Is compelled to relinquish, for a time, his labors of translation. Mr. Rose's first visit to him. His sudden recovery. Manner of spending his time. Peculiarities of his case. Is dissuaded from resuming his translation. His determination to persevere in it. Applies to it with the utmost diligence. Great care with which he translated it. His admiration of the original. Providential preservation of Mrs. Unwin. His painful depression unremoved.

By the end of November, 1786, Cowper was comfortably settled in his new residence at Weston. The house was delightfully situated, very near that of his friendly and accomplished landlord, Sir John Throckmorton, with whom he was now on terms of intimacy, and who had given him the full use of his spacious and agreeable pleasure grounds. This afforded him an opportunity, at almost all seasons, of taking that degree of exercise in the open air, which he always found so conducive to his health. The following extracts from his first letter to Lady Hesketh, after entering on his new abode, describe the state of his feelings, and prove how truly he enjoyed the change. "November 26, 1786. It is my birth-day, my beloved cousin, and I determine to employ a part of it that is not destitute of festivity, in writing to you. The dark thick fog that has obscured it, would have been a burthen to me at Olney, but here I have hardly attended to it. The neatness and snugness of our abode, compensates for all the dreariness of the season, and whether the ways are wet or dry, our house, at least, is always warm and commodious. Oh! for you, my cousin, to partake of these comforts with us! I will not begin already to tease you upon that subject, but Mrs. Unwin remembers to have heard from your own lips, that you hate London in the spring: perhaps, therefore, by that time, you may be glad to escape from a scene which will be every day growing more disagreeable, that you may enjoy the comforts of the Lodge. You well know that the best house has a desolate appearance unfurnished. This house accordingly, since it has been occupied by us, and our *meubles*, is as much superior to what it was when you saw it, as you can imagine; the parlor is even elegant. When I say that the parlor is elegant, I do not mean to insinuate that the study is not so. It is neat, warm, and silent, and a much better study than I deserve, if I do not produce in it an incomparable translation of Homer. I think every day of those lines of Milton, and congratulate myself on having obtained, before I am quite superannuated, what he seems not to have hoped for sooner.

"And may at length my weary age
Find out the peaceful hermitage."

For, if it is not an hermitage, at least it is a much better thing, and you must always understand, my dear, that when poets talk of cottages, hermitages, and such like things, they mean a house with six sashes in front, two comfortable parlors, a smart stair-case, and three bed-chambers, of convenient dimensions; in short, exactly such a house as this is.

"The Throckmortons continue the most obliging neighbors in the world. One morning last week, they both went with me to the cliffs—a scene, my dear, in which you would delight beyond measure, but which you cannot visit except in the spring or autumn. The heat of summer, and clinging dirt of winter would destroy you. What is called the cliff, is no cliff, nor at all like one, but a beautiful terrace, sloping gently down to the base, and from the brow of which, though it is not lofty, you have a view of such a valley, as makes that which you saw from the hills near Olney, and which I have had the honor to celebrate, an affair of no consideration.

"Wintry as the weather is, do not suspect that it confines me. I ramble daily, and every day change my ramble. Wherever I go, I find short grass under my feet, and when I have travelled perhaps five miles, come home with shoes not at all too dirty for a drawing-room."

Cowper was scarcely settled in his new abode, and had hardly had time to participate of its enjoyments, before an event occurred, which plunged both him and Mrs. Unwin into the deepest distress. It pleased God, who does every thing according to his will, with angels as well as with men, all whose dispensations, mysterious as some of them may appear, are conducted on principles of unerring wisdom, and infinite benevolence, to remove from this scene of toil and labor, to regions of peace and happiness, Mrs. Unwin's son, in the prime of life, and in a manner the most sudden and unexpected. Cowper had always loved him as a brother, and had most unreservedly communicated his mind to him, on all occasions. Their attachment to each other was mutually strong, cordial, and affectionate. The loss of such a friend could not fail to make a deep impression on the poet's mind, and the following extracts will show how much he felt on the occasion:—"I find myself here situated exactly to my mind. Weston is one of the prettiest villages in England; the walks about it are at all seasons of the year delightful. We had just begun to enjoy the pleasantness of our new situation, to find at least as much comfort in it as the season of the year would permit, when affliction found us out in our retreat, and the news reached us of the death of Mr. Unwin. He had taken a western tour with Mr. Henry Thornton, and on his return at Winchester, was seized with a putrid fever, which sent him to his grave. He is gone to it, however, though young, as fit for it as age itself could have made him. Regretted, indeed, and always to be regretted by those who knew him; for he had every thing that makes a man valuable, both in his principles and in his manners, but leaving still this consolation to his surviving friends; that he was desirable in this world chiefly because he was so well prepared for a better.

"The death of one whom I valued as I did Mr. Unwin, is a subject on which I could say much, and with much feeling. But habituated as my mind has been these many years to melancholy themes, I am glad to excuse myself the contemplation of them as much as possible. I will only observe that the death of so young a man, whom I saw so lately in good health, and whose life was so desirable on every account, has something in it peculiarly distressing. I cannot think of the widow and the children he has left, without a heart-ache that I remember not to have felt before. We may well say that the ways of God are mysterious: in truth, they are so, and to a degree that only such events can give us any conception of. Mrs. Unwin's life has been so much a life of affliction, that whatever occurs to her in that shape, has not, at least, the terrors of novelty to embitter it. She is supported under this, as she has been under a thousand others, with a submission of which I never saw her deprived for a moment.

"Though my experience has long since taught me that this world is a world of shadows, and that it is the more prudent, as well as the more Christian course, to possess the comforts that we find in it, as if we possessed them not, it is no easy matter to reduce this doctrine to practice. We forget that that God who gave them, may, when he pleases, take them away; and that, perhaps, it may please him to take them away at a time when we least expect it, and are least disposed to part with them. Thus it

has happened in the present case. There never was a moment in Unwin's life when there seemed to be more urgent want of him than the moment in which he died. He had attained to an age, when, if they are at any time useful, men become more useful to their families, their friends, and the world. His parish began to feel, and to be sensible of the value of his ministry; his children were thriving under his own tuition and management. The removal of a man in the prime of life, of such a character, and with such connections, seems to make a void in society that can never be filled. God seemed to have made him just what he was, that he might be a blessing to others, and when the influence of his character and abilities began to be felt, removed him. These are mysteries that we cannot contemplate without astonishment, but which will nevertheless be explained hereafter, and must, in the mean time, be revered in silence. It is well for Mrs. Unwin that she has spent her life in the practice of an habitual acquiescence in the dispensations of Providence, else I know that this stroke would have been heavier, after all that she has suffered upon another account, than she could have borne. She derives, as she well may, great consolation from the thought that he lived the life, and died the death of a Christian. The consequence is, if possible, more certain than the most mathematical conclusion, that therefore he is happy."

Cowper had scarcely given vent to his feelings on the melancholy occurrence of Mr. Unwin's decease, when he was himself again visited by severe indisposition. His depressive malady retured, with all its baleful consequences, and prevented him for more than six months, either from doing any thing with his translation of Homer, or carrying on his correspondence with his friends, or even from enjoying the conversation of those with whom he was most intimately associated, and whom he loved most affectionately. It is highly probable, that the painful feelings, occasioned by a too frequent recurrence to the apparently disastrous consequences, that must be the result of his friend's removal, occasioned this attack. His mind bore up under the first shock with comparative firmness, but his intense feelings, perhaps, pictured its remote effects in colors much more gloomy than were ever likely to be realized. Such seems to have been the case with him at the death of his brother. He attended him in his dying hours, saw him gradually sink into the arms of death, arranged all the affairs of his funeral, and then, when other persons less susceptible of feeling, would in all probability have forgotten the event, his apprehensive mind invested it with imaginary h. rrors that were to him insupportable.

This affliction of Cowper's commenced in the early part of January, 1787. In his letters to his cousin, he thus adverts to the first symptoms of it:—"I have had a little nervous fever lately, that has somewhat abridged my sleep, and though I find myself better to-day than I have been since it seized me, yet I feel my head lightish, and not in the best order for writing." In the next letter to the same correspondent, written about a week afterwards—the last he wrote to any of his correspondents until his recovery, he again adverts to the progress of his complaint. "I have been so much indisposed with the nervous fever, that I told you in my last had seized me, my nights, during the whole week, may be said to have been almost sleepless. The consequence has been, that, except the translation of about thirty lines at the conclusion of the thirteenth book, I have been forced to abandon Homer entirely. This was a sensible mortification to me, as you may suppose, and felt the more, because my spirits of course failing with my strength, I seemed to have peculiar need of my old amusement. It seemed hard, therefore, to be forced to resign it, just when I wanted it most. But Homer's battles cannot be fought by a man who does not sleep well, and who has not some little degree of animation in the daytime. Last night, however, quite contrary to my expectation, the fever left me entirely, and I slept soundly, quietly and long. If it please God that it return not, I shall soon find myself in a condition to proceed. I walk constantly, that is to say, Mrs. Unwin and I together; for at these times I keep her constantly employed, and never suffer her to be absent from me many minutes. She gives me all her time, and all her attention, and forgets that there is another object in the world besides myself."

About this time, that intimacy between Cowper and Samuel Rose, Esq. which subsequently ripened into a friendship that nothing but death could dissolve, commenced. At the close of the letter from which we made our last extract, Cowper thus adverts to the circumstance:—"A young gentleman called here yesterday, who came six miles out of his way to see me. He was on a journey from London to Glasgow, having just left the university there. He came, I suppose, partly to satisfy his own curiosity, but chiefly, as it seemed, to bring me the thanks of some of the Scotch professors for my two volumes. His name is Rose, an Englishman. Your spirits being good, you will derive more pleasure from this incident than I can at present, therefore I send it." Notwithstanding the depression of mind which Cowper was beginning again to experience, when this unexpected interview between him and Mr. Rose took place, and his consequent aversion to the visits of any one, but especially strangers, yet he was so highly pleased with his new friend, that he commenced a correspondence with him immediately on recovering his health; and he ever regarded it as a providential circumstance, and a token of the goodness of God towards him, in giving him a friend and a correspondent, who, in some measure at least, supplied the loss he had experienced by the death of Mr. Unwin.

In February, 1787, Cowper's depressive malady had so greatly increased, that his mind became again enveloped in the deepest gloom. The following extracts from his letters, written after his recovery, which took place in the ensuing autumn, will best describe the painful and distressing state to which he was reduced:—"My indisposition could not be of a worse kind. Had I been afflicted with a fever, or confined by a broken bone, neither of these cases would have made it impossible that we should meet. I am truly sorry that the impediment was insurmountable while it lasted, for such, in fact, it was. The sight of any face, except Mrs. Unwin's was to me an insupportable grievance; and when it has happened, that by forcing himself into my hiding place, some friend has found me out, he has had no great cause to exult in his success, as Mr. Bull could tell you. From this dreadful condition of mind, I emerged suddenly; so suddenly, that Mrs. Unwin, having no notice of such a change herself, could give none to any body; and when it obtained, how long it might last, and how far it might be depended upon, was a matter of the greatest uncertainty. It affects me on the recollection with the more concern, because it has deprived me of an interview with you, and has prevented you from visiting others who would have been very glad to see you."

In the midst of Cowper's severe attack, his friend, Mr. Rose paid him another visit, and was greatly distressed to find him reduced to such a degree of

wretchedness that he could not be prevailed upon to converse with him on any subject. Cowper, as soon as he began to feel the slightest symptoms of recovery, recollected the great sympathy and disinterested kindness of his new friend, and he took care to present him with the first productions of his pen. In the last week of July, 1787, he thus addressed him:—"This is the first time I have written these six months; and nothing but the constraint of obligation could induce me to write now. I cannot be so wanting to myself as not to endeavor, at least, to thank you, both for the visits with which you have favored me, and the poem that you have sent me. In my present state of mind I *taste* nothing, nevertheless I read—partly from habit, and partly because it is the only thing I am capable of." A month afterwards he again wrote to the same correspondent. "I have not yet taken up my pen, except to write to you. The little taste that I have had of your company, and your kindness in finding me out, make me wish that we were nearer neighbors, and that there were not so great a disparity in our years; that is to say, not that you were older, but that I was younger. Could we have met early in life, I flatter myself that we might have been more intimate than we are now likely to be. But you shall not find me slow to cultivate such a measure of your regard as your friends of your own age can spare me. I hope the same kindness which has prompted you twice to call on me, will prompt you again; and I shall be happy, if, on a future occasion, I shall be able to give you a more cheerful reception than can be expected from an invalid. My health and spirits are considerably improved, and I once more associate with my neighbors. My head, however, has been the worst part of me, and still continues so; is subject to giddiness and pain, maladies very unfavorable to poetical employment: but I feel some encouragement to hope that I may possibly, before long, find myself able to resume the translation of Homer. When I cannot walk, I read, and read perhaps more than is good for me. But I cannot be idle. The only mercy that I show myself in this respect is, that I read nothing that requires much closeness of application."

Cowper was now recovered sufficiently to resume his correspondence with Lady Hesketh, and the following extracts will throw some additional light on the gradually improving state of his health, and on the manner in which he then spent his time:—"My dear cousin, though it costs me something to write, it would cost me more to be silent. My intercourse with my neighbors being renewed, I can no longer forget how many reasons there are why you especially should not be neglected: no neighbor, indeed, but the kindest of my friends, and ere long, I hope an inmate. My health and spirits seem to be mending daily. To what end I know not, neither will conjecture, but endeavor, as far as I can, to be content that they do so. I use exercise, and take the air in the park; I read much; have lately read Savary's Travels in Egypt, Memoirs of Baron du Tott, Fenn's Original Letters, the Letters of Frederick of Bohemia, and am now reading Memoirs d'Henri de Lorraine, Duc de Gaise. I have also read Barclay's Argenis, a Latin romance, and the best romance that was ever written. All these, together with Madan's Letters to Priestley, and several pamphlets, I have read within these two months. So that you will say I am a great reader. I, however, write but little, because writing is become new to me; but I shall come on by degrees, and hope to regain the use of my pen before long. Our friends at the Hall make themselves more and more amiable in our account, by treating us rather as old friends, than as friends newly acquired. There are few days in which we do not meet, and I am now al most as much at home in their house as in my own. I have the free use of their library, an acquisition of great value to me, as I cannot live without books. By this means I have been so well supplied, that I have not yet even looked at the Lounger, which you were so kind as to send me. His turn comes next, and I shall probably begin him to-morrow."

Cowper's correspondence with Mr. Newton had now been suspended for some months. In the beginning of the ensuing October he renewed it; and the following extracts will afford some interesting information respecting the peculiarity of his case:—

"*My Dear Friend*—After a long but necessary interruption of our correspondence, I return to it again in one respect, at least better qualified for it than before; I mean by a belief of your identity, which, for thirteen years, strange and unaccountable as it may appear, I did not believe. The acquisition of this light, if light it may be called, which leaves me as much in the dark as ever, on the most interesting subjects, releases me, however, from the most disagreeable suspicion that I am addressing myself to you as the friend whom I loved and valued so highly in my better days, while in fact you are not that friend, but a stranger. I can now write to you without seeming to act a part, and without having any need to charge myself with dissimulation—a charge from which, in that state of mind, and under such an uncomfortable persuasion, I know not how to exculpate myself, and which, as you will easily conceive, not seldom made my correspondence with you a burden. Still, indeed, it wants, and is likely to want, that best ingredient, which alone can make it truly pleasant, either to myself or you—that spirituality which once enlivened all our intercourse. You will tell me, no doubt, that the knowledge I have gained is an earnest of more, and more valuable information too; and that the dispersion of the clouds in part, promises, in due time, their complete dispersion. I should be happy to believe it; but the power to do so is at present far from me. Never was the mind of man benighted to the degree that mine has been. The storms that have assailed me would have overset the faith of every man that ever had any; and the very remembrance of them, even after they have been long passed by, makes hope impossible. Mrs. Unwin, whose poor bark is still held together, though much shattered by being tossed and agitated so long at the side of mine, does not forget yours and Mrs. Newton's kindness on this last occasion. Mrs. Newton's offer to come to her assistance, and your readiness to have rendered us the same service, could you have hoped for any salutary effect of your presence, neither Mrs. Unwin nor myself undervalue, nor shall presently forget. But you judged right when you supposed that even your company would have been no relief to me; the company of my father or my brother, could they have been returned from the dead to visit me, would have been none. We are now busy in preparing for the reception of Lady Hesketh, whom we expect here shortly. Mrs. Unwin's time has, of course, been lately occupied to a degree that made writing, to her impracticable; and she excused herself the rather, knowing my intentions to take her office. It does not, however, suit me to write much at a time. This last tempest has left my nerves in a worse condition than it found them; my head especially, though better informed, is more infirm than ever; I will therefore only add, that I rejoice to hear Mrs. Cowper has been so comfortably supported under her heavy trial. She must have severely felt the loss of her son. She has an affectionate heart towards her children, and could not but be sensible of the bitter-

ness of such a cup. But God's presence sweetens every bitter. Desertion is the only evil that a Christian cannot bear."

Cowper's friends were all delighted to see him again in full possession of his mental powers; and, as many of them attributed his last attack to the irritation and fatigue occasioned by his translation of Homer, they endeavored to dissuade him from pursuing it, and recommended him to confine his attention to original poetry. Cowper was not, however, to be diverted from his purpose without an irrefragable proof of its injurious tendency, and he had formed a very different opinion on the subject to that of his friends. In a letter to Mr. Newton, he particularly adverts to it.—"I have many kind friends, who, like yourself, wish that, instead of turning my endeavors to a translation of Homer, I had proceeded in the way of original poetry. But I can truly say, that it was ordered otherwise, not by me, but by that God who governs all my thoughts, and directs all their intentions as he pleases. It may seem strange, but it is true, that after having written a volume, in general, with great ease to myself, I found it impossible to write another page. The mind of man is not a fountain, but a cistern; and mine, God knows, a broken one. It is my creed, that the intellect depends as much, both for the energy and the multitude of its exertions, upon the operations of God's agency upon it, as the heart, for the exercise of its graces, upon the influence of the Holy Spirit. According to this persuasion, I may very reasonably affirm, that it was not God's good pleasure that I should proceed in the same track, because he did not enable me to do it. A whole year I waited, and waited in circumstances of mind that made a state of mere employment peculiarly irksome to me. I longed for the pen as the only remedy, but I could find no subject: extreme distress, at last, drove me, as, if I mistake not, I told you some time since, to lay Homer before me, and translate for amusement. Why it pleased God that I should be hunted into such a business, of such enormous length and labor, by miseries for which he did not see good to afford me any other remedy, I know not. But so it was; and jejune as the consolation may be, and unsuited to the exigencies of a mind that once was spiritual, yet a thousand times have I been glad of it, for a thousand times it has served, at least, to divert my attention, in some degree, from such terrible tempests as I believe have seldom been permitted to beat upon a human mind. Let my friends, therefore, who wish me some little measure of tranquillity in the performance of the most turbulent voyage that ever Christian mariner made, be contented, that having Homer's mountains and forests to windward, I escape, under their shelter, from many a gust of melancholy depression that would almost overset me, especially when they consider that, not by choice, but by necessity, I make *them* my refuge. As to the fame, and honor, and glory, that may be acquired by poetical feats of any sort, God knows, that if I could lay me down in my grave with hope at my side, or sit with this companion in a dungeon all the residue of my days, I would cheerfully waive them all. For, the little fame that I have already earned, has never saved me from one distressing night, or from one despairing day, since I first acquired it. *For* what I am reserved, or *to* what, is a mystery; I would fain hope, not merely that I may amuse others, or only to be a translator of Homer."

Ten months had now elapsed since Cowper had laid aside his translation, and as Johnston, the publisher, had been informed of his recovery, he wrote to require him to persevere in the work with as little delay as possible.—Cowper immediately recommenced the undertaking, and again entered upon it with all his former spirit and activity. The following extracts will show that his affliction had not deprived him of the vigor of his mind, or produced in him the slightest disinclination to engage in this laborious work. "I am as heretofore occupied with Homer; my present occupation is the revisal of all I have done, which is the first fifteen books. I stand amazed at my own increasing dexterity in the business, being verily persuaded that as far as I have gone, I have improved the work to double its value. I will assure you, that it engages, unavoidably, my whole attention. The length of it, the spirit of it, and the exactness requisite to its due performance, are so many most interesting subjects of consideration to me, who find that my best attempts are only introductory to others, and, that what to-day I supposed finished, to-morrow I must begin again. Thus it fares with a translator of Homer.—To exhibit the majesty of such a poet in a modern language, is a task that no man can estimate the difficulty of till he attempts it. To paraphrase him loosely, to hang him with trappings that do not belong to him, all this is comparatively easy. But to represent him with only his own ornaments, and still to preserve his dignity, is a labor that if I hope in any measure to achieve it, I am sensible can only be achieved by the most assiduous and most unremitting attention; a perseverance that nothing can discourage, a minuteness of observation that suffers nothing to escape, and a determination not to be seduced from the staight line that lies before us, by any images which fancy may present. There are perhaps, few arduous undertakings that are not, in fact, more arduous than we at first supposed them. As we proceed, difficulties increase upon us, but our hopes gather strength also, and we conquer difficulties, which, could we have foreseen them, we should never have had the boldness to encounter. You possess by nature all that is necessary to success in the profession you have chosen. What remains is in your own power. They say of poets, that they must be born such; so must mathematicians, so must great generals, so must lawyers, and so indeed must men of all denominations, or it is not possible that they should excel. But with whatever faculties we are born, and to whatever studies our genius may direct us, *studies* they must still be. I am persuaded that Milton did not write his Paradise Lost, nor Homer his Iliad, nor Newton his Principia, without immense labor. Nature gave them a bent to their respective pursuits, and that strong propensity, I suppose, is what we mean by genius. The rest they gave themselves.

"My first thirteen books of Homer have been criticised in London; have been by me accommodated to those criticisms, returned to London in their improved state, and sent back to Weston with an imprimatur. This would satisfy some poets less anxious than myself about what they expose in public, but it has not satisfied me. I am now revising them again, by the light of my own critical taper, and make more alterations than at the first. But are they improvements? you will ask. Is not the spirit of the work endangered by all this correctness? I think and hope that it is not. Being well aware of the possibility of such a catastrophe, I guard particularly against it. Where I find a servile adherence to the original would render the passage less animated than it should be, I still, as at the first, allow myself a liberty. On all other occasions, I prune with an unsparing hand, determined that there shall not be found in the whole translation an idea that is not Homer's. My ambition is, to produce the closest copy possible, and at the same time as harmonious as I can possibly make it.—This

being my object, you will no longer think, if indeed you had thought it at all, that I am unnecessarily and over-much industrious. The original surpasses every thing; it is of an immense length, is composed in the best language ever used upon earth, and deserves, indeed demands, all the labor that any translator, be he who he may, can possibly bestow upon it. At present, mere English readers know no more of Homer in reality, than if he had never been translated. That consideration indeed it was, which mainly induced me to the undertaking; and if after all, either through idleness or dotage upon what I have already done, I leave it chargeable with the same incorrectness as my predecessors, or, indeed, with any other that I may be able to amend, I had much better have amused myself otherwise. I am now in the nineteenth book of the Iliad, and on the point of displaying such feats of heroism, performed by Achilles, as make all other achievements trivial. I may well exclaim, Oh, for a muse of fire! especially, having not only a great host to cope with, but a great river also; much, however, may be done when Homer leads the way. What would I give if he were now living, and within my reach! I, of all men living, have the best excuse for indulging such a wish, unreasonable as it may seem, for I have no doubt the fire of his eyes, and the smile of his lips, would put me, now and then, in possession of his full meaning more effectually than any commentator."

The close application of Cowper, to the translation of Homer, was not allowed to suspend, though it in some measure interrupted, his correspondence with Mr. Newton. To him he still opened the state of his mind without the least reserve, and it will appear, from the following extracts, that he had lost, in no degree, his relish for the enjoyments of religion, though his mind still continued under the influence of his depressive malady. "Your last letter informed us, that you were likely to be much occupied for some time in writing on a subject that must be interesting to a person of your feelings—the Slave Trade. I was unwilling to interrupt your progress in so good a work, and have, therefore, enjoined myself a longer silence than I should otherwise have thought excusable, though, to say the truth, did not our once intimate fellowship in the things of God recur to my remembrance, and present me with something like a warrant for doing it, I should hardly have prevailed upon myself to write at all. Letters such as mine, to a person of a character such as yours, are like snow in harvest: and you will say, that if I will send you a letter that you can answer, I shall make your part of the business easier than it is. This I would gladly do, but though I abhor a vacuum, as much as nature herself is said to do, yet a vacuum I am bound to feel, of all such matter as may merit your perusal. I have lately been engaged in correspondence with a lady whom I never saw. She lives at Perton Hall, near Kimbolton, and is the wife of Dr. King, who has the living. She is evidently a Christian, and a very gracious one. I would that she had you for a correspondent, rather than me. One letter from you would do her more good than a ream of mine. But so it is; and though I despair of communicating to her any thing that will be of much advantage, I must write to her this evening. Undeserving as I feel myself to be of divine protection, I am nevertheless receiving almost daily, I might indeed say hourly, proofs of it. A few days ago, Providence interfered to preserve me from the heaviest affliction that I could now suffer: the loss of Mrs. Unwin, and in a way, too, the most shocking imaginable. Having kindled her fire in the room where she dresses, (an office that she always performs for herself,) she placed the candle on the hearth, and kneeling, addressed herself to her devotions; a thought struck her while thus occupied, that the candle, being short, might possibly catch her clothes, she pinched it out with the tongs, and set it on the table. In a few moments the chamber was so filled with smoke, that her eyes watered, and it was hardly possible to see across it. —Supposing that it proceeded from the chimney, she pushed the billets backward, and while she did so, casting her eye downward, perceived that her dress was on fire. In fact, before she extinguished the candle, the mischief that she apprehended had begun; and when she related the matter to me, she showed me her clothes, with a hole burnt in them as large as this sheet of paper. It is not possible, perhaps, that so tragical a death could occur to a person actually engaged in prayer, for her escape seems almost a miracle. Her presence of mind, by which she was enabled, without calling for help, or waiting for it, to gather up her clothes, and plunge them, burning as they were, in water, seems as wonderful a part of the occurrence as any. The very report of fire, though distant, has rendered hundreds torpid and incapable of self-succor; how much more was such a disability to be expected, when the fire had not seized a neighbor's house, or begun its devastations on our own, but was actually consuming the apparel that she wore, and seemed in possession of her person!"

The continued gloomy state of Cowper's mind will be seen by the following extract from a letter to his cousin, Lady Hesketh, with whom he corresponded, as nearly as possible, at stated and regular intervals.—January 30, 1788, he thus writes: "It is a fortnight since I heard from you, that is to say, a week longer than you have been accustomed to make me wait for a letter. I do not forget that you have recommended it to me, on occasions somewhat similar, to banish all anxiety, and to ascribe your silence only to the interruptions of company. Good advice, my dear, but not easily taken by a man circumstanced as I am. I have learned in the school of adversity, a school from which I have no expectations that I shall ever be dismissed, to apprehend the worst, and have ever found it the only course in which I can indulge myself, without the least danger of incurring a disappointment. This kind of experience, continued through many years, has given me such an habitual bias to the gloomy side of every thing, that I never have a moment's ease on any subject to which I am not indifferent. How then can I be easy, when I am left afloat upon a sea of endless conjectures, of which you furnish the occasion? Write, I beseech you, and do not forget that I am now a battered actor upon this turbulent stage, that what little vigor of mind I ever had, of the self-supporting kind, I mean, has long since been broken, and, that though I can bear nothing well, yet any thing better than a state of ignorance concerning your welfare. I have spent hours in the night, leaning upon my elbow, and wondering what your silence can mean. I entreat you, once more, to put an end to these speculations, which cost me more animal spirits than I can spare. I love you, my cousin, and cannot suspect, either with or without cause, the least evil in which you may be concerned, without being greatly troubled! O, trouble! the portion of mortals—but mine in particular—would I had never known thee, or could bid thee farewell for ever! For, I meet thee at every turn, my pillows are stuffed with thee, my very roses smell of thee, and even my cousin, who would, I am sure, cure me of all trouble if she could, is sometimes innocently the cause of trouble to me!"

CHAPTER XIII.

Pressing invitations of his friends to write a poem on the Slave Trade. Reasons for declining it. Correspondence with Mrs. King. Particular description of his feelings. Death of Sir Ashley Cowper. Description of his character. Great severity of Cowper's depression. Is again urged to write on the Slave Trade. Again declines it. Assigns particular reasons for it. His indefatigable application to Homer. Notice he took of passing events. Mr. and Mrs. Newton's visit to Weston. The pleasure it afforded Cowper. Lady Hesketh's visit. Completion of the Iliad, and commencement of the Odyssey. His unwearied application to Homer not allowed to divert his attention from religion. Occasional composition of original poetry. Readiness to listen to any alteration that might be suggested in his productions.

MANY of Cowper's friends were anxious to have him employ his admirable powers in a poem on the abolition of slavery, and Lady Hesketh wrote him several pressing invitations on the subject; to which he gave the following reply:—"I have now three letters of yours, my dearest cousin, before me, all written in the space of a week, and must be, indeed, insensible of kindness, did I not feel yours on this occasion. I cannot describe to you, neither could you comprehend it if I could, the manner in which my mind is sometimes impressed with melancholy on particular subjects. Your late silence was such a subject. I heard, saw, and felt, a thousand terrible things, which had no real existence, and was haunted by them night and day, till they at last extorted from me that doleful epistle, which I have since wished had been burnt before I sent it. But the cloud has passed, and, as far as you are concerned, my heart is once more at rest. Before you gave me the hint contained in your last letters, I had once or twice, as I lay on my bed, watching the break of day, ruminated on the subject which you kindly recommended to me. Slavery, or a release from slavery, such as the poor negroes have endured, or perhaps both these topics together, appeared to me a theme so important at the present juncture, and at the same time so susceptible of practical management, that I more than once perceived myself ready to start in that cause, could I have allowed myself to desert Homer for so long a time as it would have cost me to do them justice. While I was pondering these things, the public prints informed me that Miss More was on the point of publication, having actually finished what I had not begun. The sight of her advertisement convinced me that my best course would be that to which I felt myself most inclined; to persevere, without turning aside to attend to any other call, however alluring, in the business I have in hand. It occurred to me likewise, that I have lately borne my testimony in favor of my black brethren, and that I was one of the earliest, if not the first, of those who have, in the present day, expressed their detestation of the diabolical trade in question. On all these accounts I judged it best to be silent. I shall be glad to see Hannah More's poem; she is a favorite writer with me, and has more nerve and energy, both in her thoughts and language, than half the rhymers in the kingdom."

It will be seen by the last extract made from Cowper's letters to Mr. Newton, that he had now commenced a correspondence with Mrs. King, and as his letters to that lady are highly interesting, we shall make such use of them as will be descriptive of the state of his mind at that period. "A letter from a lady who was once intimate with my brother, could not fail of being most acceptable to me. I lost him just at a moment when those truths which have recommended my volumes to your approbation, were become his daily sustenance, as they had long been mine. But the will of God was done. I have sometimes thought that had his life been spared, being made brothers by a stricter tie than ever, in the bonds of the same faith, hope, and love, we should have been happier in each other than it was in the power of mere natural affection to make us. But it was his blessing to be taken from a world in which he had no longer any wish to continue; and it will be mine, if, while I live in it, my time may be not altogether wasted: in order to effect that good end, I wrote what I am happy to find has given you pleasure to read. But for that pleasure, Madam, you are indebted neither to me nor my muse; but (as you are well aware) to Him who alone can make divine truths palatable, in whatever vehicle conveyed. It is an established philosophical axiom, that nothing can communicate what it has not in itself, but in the effects of Christian communion, a very strong exception is found to this general rule, however self-evident it may seem. A man, himself destitute of all spiritual consolation, may, by occasion, impart it to others. Thus I, it seems, who wrote those very poems, to amuse a mind oppressed with melancholy, and who have myself derived from them no other benefit, (for mere success in authorship will do me no good,) have nevertheless, by so doing, comforted others, at the same time that they administer to me no consolation. But I will proceed no farther in this strain, lest my prose should damp a pleasure that my verse has happily excited. On the contrary, I will endeavor to rejoice in your joy, and especially, because I have myself been the instrument of conveying it."

"I owe you many acknowledgments, dear Madam, for that unreserved communication both of your history and of your sentiments, with which you honored me in your last. It gives me great pleasure to learn that you are so happily circumstanced, both in respect of situation and frame of mind. With your views of religious subjects, you could not indeed, speaking properly, be pronounced unhappy in any circumstances; but to have received from above, not only that faith which reconciles the heart to affliction, but many outward comforts also, and especially that greatest of all earthly comforts, a comfortable home, is happiness indeed. May you long enjoy it! As to health or sickness, you have learned already their true value, and know well that the former is no blessing, unless it be sanctified, and that the latter is the greatest we can receive, when we are enabled to make a proper use of it.

"The melancholy that I have mentioned to you, and concerning which you are so kind as to inquire, is of a kind, so far as I know, peculiar to myself. It does not at all affect the operations of my mind, on any subject to which I can attach it, whether serious or ludicrous, or whatever it may be; for which reason I am almost always employed either in reading or writing, when I am not engaged in conversation. A vacant hour is my abhorrence; because, when I am not occupied, I suffer under the whole influence of my unhappy temperament. I thank you for your recommendation of a medicine from which you have derived benefit yourself; but there is hardly any thing that I have not proved, however beneficial it may have been found to others, in my own case, utterly useless. I have, therefore, long since bid adieu to all hope from human means—the means excepted of perpetual employment. I will not say that we shall never meet, because it is not for a creature, who knows not what will be tomorrow, to assert any thing positively concerning the future. Things more unlikely I have seen come to pass; and things which, if I had expressed myself on them at all, I should have said were impossible. But, being respectively circumstanced as we are, there seems no present probability of it. You speak of insuperable hinderances, and I also have hinderances that would be equally difficult to sur-

mount. One is, that I never ride; that I am not able to perform so long a journey on foot; and that chaises do not roll within the sphere of that economy which my circumstances oblige me to observe. If this were not of itself a sufficient excuse, when I decline so obliging an invitation as yours, I could mention yet other obstacles. But to what end? One impracticability makes as effectual a barrier as a thousand: it will be otherwise in other worlds: either we shall not bear about us a body, or it will be more easily transportable than this. The world in which we live is indeed, as you say, a foolish world, and is likely to continue such, till the Great Teacher himself shall vouchsafe to make it wiser. I am persuaded that time alone will never mend it. But there is doubtless a day appointed when there will be a more general manifestation of the beauty of holiness, than mankind have ever yet beheld. When that period shall arrive, there will be an end of profane representations, whether of heaven or hell, on the stage, of which you complain—the great realities of religion will supersede them.

"You must think me a tardy correspondent, unless you have charity enough to suppose that I have met with other hinderances than those of indolence and inattention. With these I cannot charge myself, for I am never idle by choice; and inattentive to you I certainly have not been. My silence has been occasioned by a malady to which I have all my life been subject—an inflammation of the eyes. The last sudden change of weather, from excessive heat to a wintry degree of cold, occasioned it, and at the same time gave me a pinch of the rheumatic kind, from both which disorders I have but just recovered. I do not suppose that our climate has been much altered since the days of our forefathers, the Picts; but certainly the human constitution, in this country, has altered very much. Inured as we are from our cradles to every vicissitude, in a climate more various than any other, and in possession of all that modern refinement has been able to contrive for our security, we are yet as subject to blights as the tenderest blossoms of spring; and we are so well admonished of every change in the atmosphere by our bodily feelings, as hardly to have any need of a weather-glass to mark them. For this we are, no doubt, indebted to the multitude of our accommodations; for it was not possible to retain the hardiness that originally belonged to our race, under the delicate management to which, for many ages, we have been accustomed. It is observable, however, that though we have by these means lost much of our pristine vigor, our days are not the fewer. We live as long as those whom, on account of the sturdiness of their frame, the poets supposed to have been the progeny of oaks. Perhaps, too, they had but little feeling, and for that reason might be imagined to be so descended; for a very robust, athletic habit, seems inconsistent with much sensibility. But sensibility is the *sine qua non* of real happiness. If, therefore, our lives have been shortened, and if our feelings have been rendered more exquisite, as our habit of body has become more delicate, on the whole we have no cause to complain, but are rather gainers by our degeneracy."

In the beginning of June, 1788, an event occurred, which, though it had been long expected by Cowper and by all his friends, could not fail to make a deep impression upon his peculiarly sensitive mind. This was the death of his esteemed and venerable relation, Ashley Cowper, Esq., Clerk of the Parliaments, and brother to Cowper's father, the last moments of whose life his daughter, Lady Hesketh, had watched over with the tenderest solicitude. In reply to an affectionate letter from his friend Mr. Hill, apprizing him of the event, he thus writes:—"Your letter brought me the first intelligence of the event it mentions. My last from Lady Hesketh gave me reason enough to expect it; but the certainty of it was unknown to me till I learned it by your information. If gradual decline, the consequence of great age, be a sufficient preparation of the mind to encounter such a loss, our minds were certainly prepared to meet it: yet to you I need not say that no preparation can supersede the feelings of the heart on such occasions. While our friends yet live, inhabitants of the same world with ourselves, they seem still to live to *us*—we are sure that they often think of *us;* and, however improbable it may seem, it is never impossible that we may see each other once again. But the grave, like a great gulf, swallows all such expectations, and in the moment when a beloved friend sinks into it, a thousand tender recollections awaken a regret that will be felt in spite of all reasonings, and let our warnings have been what they may. My dear uncle's death awakened in me many reflections, which, for a time, sunk my spirits. A man like him would have been mourned had he doubled the age he reached. At any age his death would have been felt as a loss that no survivor could repair. And though it was not probable that, for my own part, I should ever see him more, yet the consciousness that he still lived, was a comfort to me. Let it comfort us now, that we have lost him only at a time when nature could afford him to us no longer; that as his life was blameless, so was his death without anguish, and that he is gone to heaven. I know not that human life, in its most prosperous state, can present any thing to our wishes half so desirable as such a close of it."

In another letter, he again writes:—"We have indeed lost one who has not left his like in the present generation of our family; and whose equal, in all respects, no future generation of it will probably produce. I often think what a joyful interview there has been between him and some of his friends who went before him. The truth of the matter is, my dear, they are happy ones, and we shall never be entirely so ourselves till we have joined the party. Can there be any thing so worthy of our warmest wishes as to enter on an eternal, unchangeable state, in blessed fellowship and communion with those whose society we valued most, and for the best reasons, while they continued with us? A few steps more through a vain, foolish world, and this happiness will be yours. But I earnestly hope the end of thy journey is not near. For of all that live, thou art one whom I can least spare: for thou also art one who shall not leave thy equal behind thee."

The state of Cowper's mind at this period will be discovered by the following extract from a letter to his friend Mr. Bull, who appears to have solicited him for some original hymns, to be used by him probably on some public occasion. "Ask possibilities, and they shall be performed; but ask not hymns from a man suffering with despair as I do. I would not sing the Lord's song were it to save my life, banished as I am, not to a strange land, but to a remoteness from his presence, in comparison to which the distance from east to west is no distance—is vicinity and cohesion. I dare not, either in prose or verse, allow myself to express a frame of mind which I am conscious does not belong to me; least of all can I venture to use the language of absolute resignation, lest, only counterfeiting, I should, for that very reason, be taken strictly at my word, and lose all my remaining comfort. Can there not be found, among the translations of Madame Guion, somewhat that might serve the purpose? I should think there might. Submission to the will of Christ, my memory tells me, is a theme that pervades them all. If so, your request is performed already; and if any alteration in them should be necessary, I will, with all my heart, make it. I have no objection to

giving the graces of a foreigner an English dress, but insuperable ones to all false pretences and affected exhibitions of what I do not feel."

Several of Cowper's correspondents, at this time again strongly urged him to write a poem on the Slave Trade. The following extracts will show that he was unwilling to give a refusal, though he could by no means prevail upon himself to accede to their wishes. "Twice or thrice, before your request came, have I been solicited to write a poem on the cruel, odious, and disgusting subject of Negro Slavery. But besides that it would be in some sort treason against Homer to abandon him for any other matter, I felt myself so much hurt in my spirits the moment I entered on the contemplation of it, that I have at last determined, absolutely, to have nothing more to do with it. There are some scenes of horror on which my imagination has dwelt not without some complacency; but then they are such scenes as God, not man, produces. In earthquakes, high winds, tempestuous seas, there is a grand as well as a terrible. But when man is tempted to disturb, there is such meanness in the design and such cruelty in the execution, that I both hate and despise the whole operation, and feel it a degradation of poetry to employ her in the description of it. I hope, also, that the generality of my countrymen have more generosity in their nature than to want the fiddle of verse to go before them in the performance of an act to which they are invited by the loudest calls of humanity. I shall rejoice if your friend, influenced by what you told him of my present engagements, shall waive his application to me for a poem on this revolting subject. I account myself honored by his intention to solicit one, and it would give me pain to refuse him, which inevitably I shall be constrained to do. The more I have considered it, the more I have convinced myself that it is not a promising theme for verse, at least to me. General censure on the iniquity of the practice will avail nothing. The world has been overwhelmed with such remarks already, and to particularize all the horrors of it, were an employment for the mind, both of the poet and of his readers, of which they would necessarily soon grow weary. For my own part, I cannot contemplate the subject very nearly, without a degree of abhorrence that affects my spirits, and sinks them below the pitch requisite for success in verse. Lady Hesketh recommended it to me some months since, and then I declined it for those reasons, and for others which I need not now mention."

The close attention that Cowper found it necessary to pay to his Homer, left him, at this period, but little time for any other engagement. Adverting to this, he thus writes to Mr. Newton:—"It is a comfort to me that you are so kind as to make allowance for me, in consequence of my being so busy a man. The truth is, that could I write with both hands, and with both at the same time—verse with one, and prose with the other—I should not, even so, be able to despatch both my poetry and my arrears of correspondence faster than I have need. The only opportunities that I can find for conversing with distant friends are in the early hour, (and that sometimes reduced to half a one,) before breakfast. Neither am I exempt from hinderances, which, while they last, are insurmountable, especially one, by which I have been occasionally a sufferer all my life—an inflammation of the eyes; which has often disabled me from all sorts of scribbling. When I tell you that an unanswered letter troubles my conscience, in some degree, like a crime, you will think me endued with a most heroic patience, who have so long submitted to that trouble on account of yours, not answered yet. But the truth is, that I have been much engaged. Homer, you know, affords me constant employment, besides which I have rather, what may be called—considering the privacy in which I have long lived—a numerous correspondence: to one of my friends in particular, a near and much beloved relation, I write weekly, and sometimes twice in the week; nor are these my only excuses: the sudden changes of the weather have much affected me, and have often made me wholly incapable of writing."

The summer of 1788 was remarkably hot and dry, and to show the manner in which it affected Cowper's mind we give the following extract from a letter to one of his correspondents:—"It has pleased God to give us rain, without which, this part of the country, at least, must soon have become a desert. The goodness and power of God are never, (I believe,) so universally acknowledged as at the end of a long drought. Man is naturally a self-sufficient animal, and in all concerns that seem to be within the sphere of his own ability, thinks little, or not at all, of the need he always has of protection and furtherance from above. But he is sensible that the clouds will not assemble at *his* bidding, and that though they do assemble, they will not fall in showers, because *he* commands them. When therefore the blessing descends, you shall hear, even in the streets, the most irreligious and thoughtless with one voice exclaim—Thank God! Confessing themselves indebted to his power, and willing, at least as far as words go, to give Him the glory. I can hardly doubt, therefore, that the earth is sometimes parched, and the crops endangered, in order that the multitude may not want a memento to whom they owe them; nor absolutely forget the power on which we all depend for all things. The summer is leaving us at a rapid rate, as indeed do all the seasons, and though I have marked their flight often, I know not which is the swiftest. Man is never so deluded as when he dreams of his own duration. The answer of the old patriarch to Pharaoh may be adopted by every man at the close of the longest life.—'Few and evil have been the days of the years of my pilgrimage.' Whether we look back from fifty, or from twice fifty, the past appears equally a dream; and we can only be said to have lived, while we have been profitably employed. Alas, then! making the necessary deductions, how short is life! Were men in general to save themselves all the steps they take to no purpose, or to a bad one, what numbers, who are now active and thoughtless, would become sedentary and serious!"

In the latter part of July, 1788, Mr. and Mrs. Newton paid Cowper a visit at Weston; and the pleasure it afforded him, will, with the state of his mind on the occasion, be seen by the following extract from a letter addressed to Mr. Newton, after his return.—"I rejoice that you and yours reached London safe, especially when I reflect that you performed your journey on a day so fatal, as I understand, to others travelling the same road. I found those comforts in your visit which have formerly sweetened all our interviews, in part restored. I knew you, knew you for the same shepherd who was sent to lead me out of the wilderness into the pasture, where the Chief Shepherd feeds his flock, and felt my sentiments of affectionate friendship for you the same as ever. But one thing was still wanting, and that thing the crown of all. I shall find it in God's time, if it be not lost for ever. When I say this, I say it trembling: for at what time soever comfort may come, it will not come without its attendant evil: and whatever good things may occur in the interval, I have sad forebodings of the event, having learned by experience that I was born to be persecuted with peculiar fury, and assured by believing, that such as my lot has been, it will be to the end. This belief is connected in my mind with

an observation I have often made, and is, perhaps, founded in great part upon it—that there is a certain *style* of dispensations maintained by Providence, in the dealings of God with every man, which, however the incidents of his life may vary, and though he may be thrown into different situations, is never exchanged for another. The style of dispensation peculiar to myself has hitherto been that of sudden, violent, unlooked-for change. When I have thought myself falling into the abyss, I have been caught up again; when I have thought myself on the threshold of a happy eternity, I have been thrust down to hell. The rough and the smooth of such a lot, taken together, should perhaps have taught me never to despair; but through an unhappy propensity in my nature to forebode the worst, they have, on the contrary, operated as an admonition for me, never to hope. A firm persuasion that I can never durably enjoy a comfortable state of mind, but must be depressed in proportion as I have been elevated, withers my joys in the bud, and, in a manner, entombs them before they are born: for I have no expectation but of sad vicissitude, and ever believe that the last shock of all will be fatal."

It might be supposed, from the gloomy state of Cowper's mind, as described by his letters, that no person could feel any real enjoyment in his society, and that his friends who visited him, did so, not so much for their own sake as for his. The fact, however, was, that all who had once been favored with his company, were particularly anxious to enjoy it again; for though he was never what might be termed brilliant in conversation, yet he was always interesting; and his amiable, polite, and unaffected manners, associated with his rich intellectual acquirements, which he had the happy talent of displaying in a manner perfectly unobtrusive, made him the charm of the social circle. His anxiety to promote the happiness of those with whom he might happen to be associated, gave to his conversation an air of cheerfulness, and sometimes even of sprightliness and vivacity, altogether different to that which generally pervaded his correspondence: and the same amiable solicitude for the welfare of others, caused him sometimes to write to his correspondents, in a style the most playful and agreeable. Of this we have an instance, in a letter to Mrs. King, written about this time.—"You express some degree of wonder that I found you out to be sedentary, at least, much a stayer within doors, without any sufficient data for my direction. Now, if I should guess your figure and stature with equal success, you will deem me not only a poet, but a conjuror. Yet, in fact, I have no pretensions of that sort. I have only formed a picture of you in my own imagination, as we ever do of a person of whom we think much, but whom we have never seen. Your height, I conceive, to be about five feet five inches, which, though it would make a short man, is yet height enough for a woman. If you insist on an inch or two more, I have no objection. You are not very fat, but somewhat inclined to be so, and unless you allow yourself a little more air and exercise, will incur some danger of exceeding your present dimensions before you die. Let me, therefore, once more recommend to you, to walk a little more, at least in your garden, and to amuse yourself with pulling up here and there a weed, for it will be an inconvenience to you to be much fatter than you are, especially when your strength will be naturally on the decline. I have given you a fair complexion, a slight tinge of the rose on your cheeks, dark brown hair, and, if the fashion would give you leave to show it, an open and well-formed forehead. To all this I add a pair of eyes not quite black, but approaching nearly to that hue, and very animated. I have not absolutely determined on the shape of your nose or the form of your mouth, but should you tell me that I have in other respects drawn a tolerable likeness, have no doubt but I can describe them too. I assure you that though I have a great desire to read Lavater, I have never seen his volumes, nor have I availed myself in the least of any of his rules on this occasion. Ah, Madam! if with all this sensibility of yours, which exposes you to so much sorrow, and necessarily must expose you to it in a world like this, I have had the good fortune to make you smile, I have then painted you, whether with a strong resemblance, or with none at all, to very good purpose."

During the time that Mr. and Mrs. Newton were on their visit at Weston, Cowper's friend, Mr. Samuel Rose, arrived there also. Cowper was highly pleased with this circumstance, as it served to enliven his social circle, and afforded him an opportunity to introduce his young friend to Mr. Newton, whose advice and influence might probably be of considerable advantage to him at a future period. To a person, easily diverted from his purpose, the company of friends whom he so highly esteemed, would have been thought a sufficient excuse for the suspension of every literary engagement. Cowper, however, labored indefatigably at his translation, and instead of laying it aside because of his friends' visits, he gladly availed himself of their advice and assistance. We learn from the following remarks, extracted from a letter to his cousin, written about this time, that Cowper would not allow his friend Rose to pay him an idle visit:—"My dear cousin, the Newtons are still here, and will continue with us, I believe, till the 15th of the month. Here is also my friend, Mr. Rose, a valuable young man, who, attracted by the effluvia of my genius, found me out in my retirement last January twelvemonth. I have not permitted him to be idle, but have made him transcribe for me the twelfth book of the Iliad. He brings me the compliments of several of the literati, with whom he is acquainted in town; and tells me that from Dr. Maclain, whom he saw lately, he learns that my book is in the hands of sixty different persons at the Hague, who are all enchanted with it; not forgetting the said Dr. Maclain himself, who tells him that he reads it every day, and is always the better for it. I desire to be thankful for this encouraging information, and am willing to ascribe it to its only legitimate cause, the blessing of God upon my feeble efforts."

Shortly after Mr. Rose, and Mr. and Mrs. Newton, left Weston, the vacuum which the absence of their agreeable company made in Cowper's enjoyments, was supplied by the arrival of his cousin, Lady Hesketh, whose cheerful conversation contributed greatly to his comfort, and who diminished much of the labor of his translation by transcribing the manuscript, so that a fair copy might be forwarded to the printers. In September, 1788, he finished the Iliad, and thus describes his feelings on the occasion, in a letter to his friend, Mr. Rose:—"The day on which you shall receive this, I beg you will remember to drink one glass at least to the success of the Iliad, which I finished the day before yesterday, and yesterday began the Odyssey. It will be some time before I shall perceive myself travelling in another road; the objects around me are at present so much the same, Olympus and a council of gods meet me at my first entrance. To tell you the truth, I am weary of heroes and deities, and, with reverence be it spoken, shall be glad for variety's sake to change their company for that of Cyclops."

Cowper's time was now so much employed in his translation, that he had but little opportunity for keeping up his correspondence, and the letters he

wrote at this period abound with apologies for his apparent neglect. He still, however, found time to advert to passing events, sufficiently to prove that the bent of his mind remained decidedly serious. To Mrs. King he thus writes:—"Mrs. Battison, your late relative at Bedford, being dead, I was afraid you would have no more calls there; but the marriage so near at hand, of the young lady you mention, with a gentleman of that place, gives me hope again, that you may occasionally approach us, as heretofore; and that on some of these occasions you will perhaps find your way to Weston. The deaths of some and the marriages of others, make a new world of it every thirty years. Within that space of time, the majority are displaced, and a new generation has succeeded. Here and there one is permitted to stay a little longer, that there may not be wanting a few grave dons like myself, to make the observation. The thought struck me very forcibly the other day, on reading a paper which came hither in the package of some books from London. It contained news from Hertfordshire, and informed me among other things, that at Great Berkhamstead, the place of my birth, there is hardly a family left of all those with whom, in my early days, I was so familiar. The houses no doubt remain, but the greater part of their former inhabitants are now to be found by their grave-stones. And it is certain that I might pass through a town in which I was once a sort of principal figure, unknowing and unknown. They are happy who have not taken up their rest in a world fluctuating as the sea, and passing away with the rapidity of a river. I wish from my heart that you and Mr. King may long continue as you have already long continued, exceptions from the general truth of this remark."

Lady Hesketh remained at Weston through the greater part of the winter of 1788—9, and contributed much to revive Cowper's drooping spirits, and to cheer and animate him in his important undertaking; which seemed to engage more of his time the nearer it approached to a finish. The close attention which he found it indispensably necessary to bestow upon it, compelled him almost entirely to relinquish his correspondence. And, as a letter from him was esteemed a treasure by all his friends, many of whom began to make complaints of being neglected, he was often compelled, in those he did write, to advert to these complaints. We find him thus excusing himself for his apparent neglect:—"The post brings me no letters that do not grumble at my silence. Had not you, therefore, taken me to task as roundly as others, I should, perhaps, have concluded that you were more indifferent to my epistles than the rest of my correspondents; of whom one says, 'I shall be glad when you have finished Homer; then possibly you will find a little leisure for an old friend.' Another says, 'I don't choose to be neglected, unless you equally neglect every one else.' Thus I hear of it with both ears, and shall, till I appear in the shape of two great quarto volumes, the composition of which I confess engrosses me to a degree that gives my friends, to whom I feel myself much obliged for their anxiety to hear from me, but too much reason to complain. Johnson told Mr. Martyn the truth, when he said I had nearly completed Homer, but your inference from that truth is not altogether so just as most of your conclusions are. Instead of finding myself the more at leisure, because my labor draws to a close, I find myself the more occupied. As when a horse approaches the goal, he does not, unless he be jaded, slacken his pace, but quickens it: even so it fares with me. The end is in view; I seem almost to have reached the mark, and the nearness of it inspires me with fresh alacrity. But be it known to you, that I have still two books of the Odyssey before me, and when they are finished, shall have almost the whole eight-and-forty to revise. Judge then, my dear madam, if it is yet time for me to play, or to gratify myself with scribbling to those I love. No, it is necessary that waking I should be all absorbed in Homer, and that sleeping I should dream of nothing else."

Busily engaged, however, as Cowper was with his translation, he found time to compose several short, but beautiful poems, on various subjects, as they happened to occur to his mind. These were eagerly sought after by his correspondents, and were forwarded to them respectively, as opportunities offered, accompanied generally with the poet's acknowledgments of their comparative insignificance, at least in his own esteem. Several of these productions were written to oblige his friends, for whom Cowper always had the highest regard, and whom he felt pleased on all occasions to accommodate; others were written at the request of strangers, whom he was not unwilling, when it lay fairly in his way, to oblige. On one occasion, the parish clerk of Northampton applied to him for some verses, to be annexed to some bills of mortality, which he was accustomed to publish at Christmas. This singular incident, so illustrative of Cowper's real generosity, he relates in the following most interesting and sprightly manner:—"On Monday morning last, Sam brought me word that there was a man in the kitchen, who desired to speak with me. I ordered him in. A plain, decent, elderly-looking figure made its appearance, and being desired to sit, spoke as follows: 'Sir, I am clerk of the parish of All Saints, in Northampton; brother of Mr. C. the upholsterer. It is customary for the person in my office to annex to a bill of mortality, which he publishes at Christmas, a copy of verses. You would do me a great favor, Sir, if you would furnish me with one.' To this I replied; 'Mr. C. you have several men of genius in your town, why have you not applied to some of them? There is a namesake of yours in particular, Mr. C. the statuary, who every body knows is a first rate maker of verses. He surely is the man, of all the world, for your purpose.' 'Alas! Sir,' replied he, 'I have heretofore borrowed help from him, but he is a gentleman of so much reading, that the people of the town cannot understand him.' I confess I felt all the force of the compliment implied in this speech, and was almost ready to answer, perhaps, my good friend, they may find me unintelligible for the same reason. But on asking him whether he had walked over to Weston on purpose to implore the assistance of my muse, and on his replying in the affirmative, I felt my mortified vanity a little consoled, and pitying the poor man's distress, which appeared to be considerable, promised to supply him. The wagon has accordingly gone this day to Northampton, loaded in part with my effusions in the mortuary style. A fig for poets who write epitaphs upon individuals; I have written one that serves *two hundred* persons."

On another occasion, Cowper thus writes to Mr. Hill, adverting to the numerous entreaties he sometimes received for the assistance of his muse. "My muse were a vixen, if she were not always ready to fly in obedience to your commands. But what can be done? I can write nothing in the few hours that remain to me of this day, that will be fit for your purpose: and, unless I could dispatch what I write by to-morrow's post, it would not reach you in time. I must add, too, that my friend the vicar of the next parish, engaged me the day before yesterday, to furnish him by next Sunday with a hymn to be sung on the occasion of his preaching to the children of the Sunday-school; of which hymn I have not yet produced a syllable. I am somewhat in the case of Lawyer Dowling, in Tom Jones; and could I split

myself into as many poets as there are muses, I could find employment for them all."

These numerous engagements, however, did not prevent the poet from recording his sentiments respecting any circumstance that occurred which he thought deserving notice. About this time the following melancholy event happened, which drew from him lines expressive of his entire abhorrence of cruelty, by whomsoever perpetrated, and whether practised upon man or upon the lower order of animals. John A——, Esq. a young gentleman of large fortune, who was passionately fond of cock-fighting, came to his death in the following awful manner. He had a favorite cock, upon which he had won many large sums. The last bet he laid upon it he lost, which so enraged him, that he had the bird tied to a spit, and roasted alive, before a large fire. The screams of the suffering animal were so affecting, that some gentlemen who were present attempted to interfere, which so exasperated Mr. A——, that he seized the poker, and with the most furious vehemence declared that he would kill the first man who interfered; but in the midst of his passionate assertions, awful to relate, he fell down dead upon the spot. Cowper was so deeply affected by the circumstance, that he composed a poetic obituary on the occasion, which was inserted in the Gentleman's Magazine for May, 1789, from which we extract the following lines:

"This man (for since the howling wild
Disclaims him, man he must be styled)
Wanted no good below:
Gentle he was, if gentle birth
Could make him such, and he had worth,
If wealth can worth bestow.

Can such be cruel? such can be
Cruel as hell, and so was he;
A tyrant, entertained
With barbarous sports, whose fell delight
Was to encourage mortal fight,
'Twixt birds to battle trained.

One feathered champion he possessed,
His darling far beyond the rest,
Which never knew disgrace,
Nor e'er had fought, but he made flow
The life-blood of his fiercest foe—
The Cæsar of his race.

It chanced, at last, when on a day,
He pushed him to the desperate fray,
His courage drooped, he fled:
The master stormed, the prize was lost,
And, instant, frantic at the cost,
He doomed his favorite dead.

He seized him fast, and from the pit
Flew to the kitchen, snatched the spit,
And, Bring me cord, he cried;
The cord was brought, and at his word,
To that dire implement, the bird,
Alive and struggling, tied.

The horrid sequel asks a veil,
And all the terrors of the tale
That can be, shall be sunk;
Led by the sufferer's screams aright,
His shocked companions view the sight,
And him with pity, drunk.

All, suppliant, beg a milder fate,
For the old warrior at the grate:
He, deaf to pity's call,
Whirl'd round him, rapid as a wheel,
His culinary club of steel,
Death menacing on all.

But vengeance hung not far remote,
For while he stretched his clamorous throat,
And heaven and earth defied;
Big with a curse too closely pent,
That struggled vainly for a vent,
He totter'd, reel'd, and died.

'Tis not for us, with rash surmise,
To point the judgment of the skies;
But judgments plain as this,
That, sent for men's instruction, bring
A written label on their wing,
'Tis hard to read amiss."

It was Cowper's intention, after finishing his translation, to publish a third volume of original poems, which was to contain, in addition to a poem he intended to compose, similar to the Task, entitled "The Four Ages," all the minor unpublished productions of his pen. And it is deeply to be regretted that he was not permitted to carry this design into completion, as the interesting subject of the different stages of man's existence would have been admirably adapted for a complete development of his poetic talents.

The readiness of Cowper to listen to any alterations in his productions, suggested by his correspondents, ought not to go unrecorded. To the Rev. Walter Bagot he thus writes.—"My verses on the Queen's visit to London, either have been printed, or soon will be in the world. The finishing to which you objected, I have altered, and have substituted two new stanzas in the room of it. Two others also I have struck out, another friend having objected to them. I think I am a very tractable sort of a poet. Most of my fraternity would as soon shorten the noses of their children because they were said to be too long, as thus dock their compositions, in compliance with the opinions of others. I beg that when my life shall be written hereafter, my authorship's ductibility of temper may not be forgotten."

CHAPTER XIV.

Mrs. Unwin much injured by a fall. Cowper's anxiety respecting her. Continues incessantly engaged in his Homer. Expresses regret that it should, in some measure, have suspended his correspondence with his friends. Revises a small volume of poems for children. State of his mind. Receives as a present from Mrs. Bodham, a portrait of his mother. Feelings on the occasion. Interesting description of her character. His affectionate attachment to her. Translates a series of Latin letters from a Dutch minister of the gospel. Continuance of his depression. Is attacked with a nervous fever. Completion of his translation. Death of Mrs. Newton. His reflections on the occasion. Again revises his Homer. His unalterable attachment to religion.

In the commencement of 1789, a circumstance occurred, which occasioned Cowper considerable uneasiness. Mrs. Unwin, his amiable inmate, and faithful companion, received so severe an injury by a fall, which she got when walking on a gravel path, covered with ice, that she was confined to her room for several weeks. Though she neither dislocated any joint, nor broke any bones, yet such was the effect of the fall, that it crippled her completely, and rendered her as incapable of assisting herself as a child. It happened providentially, that Lady Hesketh was at Weston, when this painful event occurred. By her kind attention to Mrs. Unwin, and her no less tender care over her esteemed relative, lest his mind should be too deeply affected by this afflicting occurrence, she contributed greatly to the recovery of the former, and to the support of the latter. It was, however, several weeks before Mrs. Unwin recovered her strength sufficiently to attend to her domestic concerns. Her progress too, when she began to amend, was so slow, as to be almost

imperceptible, and her lengthened affliction, notwithstanding the precautionary measures adopted by herself, and by Lady Hesketh to prevent it, tended, in a great degree, to depress the mind of Cowper.

Early in the ensuing spring, Lady Hesketh was compelled to return to town. Mrs. Unwin had not then wholly recovered her strength; she was, however, so far convalescent, as to resume the management of her domestic concerns, and to pay the same kind attention to the poet's comfort as had distinguished all her former conduct towards him. The greater part of the year 1789, Cowper was incessantly engaged, principally in translating Homer, but occasionally, and indeed frequently, in composing original poems for the gratification of his friends, or in the more difficult employment of revising the productions of less gifted poets. The few letters he wrote at this time abound with apologies for his seeming negligence, and with descriptions of the manner in which he employed his time. To one of his correspondents he thus writes:—"I know that you are too reasonable a man to expect any thing like punctuality of correspondence from a translator of Homer, especially from one who is a doer also of many other things at the same time; for I labor hard, not only to acquire a little fame for myself, but to win it for others, men of whom I know nothing, not even their names, who send me their poetry, that by translating it out of prose into verse, I may make it more like poetry than it was. I begin to perceive that if a man will be an author, he must live neither to himself nor to his friends so much as to others whom he never saw nor shall see. I feel myself in no small degree unworthy of the kind solicitude which you express concerning me and my welfare, after a silence so much longer than you had reason to expect. I should, indeed, account myself inexcusable, had I not to allege in my defence, perpetual engagements of such a kind as could by no means be dispensed with. Had Homer alone been in question, Homer should have made room for you; but I have had other work in hand at the same time, equally pressing and more laborious. Let it suffice to say, that I have not wilfully neglected you for a moment, and that you have never been out of my thoughts a day together. Having heard all this, you will feel yourself disposed not only to pardon my long silence, but to pity me for the causes of it. You may, if you please, believe likewise, for it is true, that I have a faculty of remembering my friends even when I do not write to them, and of loving them not one jot the less, though I leave them to starve for want of a letter from me."

In a letter to Mr. Newton, 16th August, 1789, Cowper thus describes the situation in which he was then placed, and the state of his mind at the time:—"Mrs. Newton and you are both kind and just in believing that I do not love you the less when I am long silent: perhaps a friend of mine who wishes to be always in my thoughts, is never so effectually possessed of the accomplishment of that wish, as when I have been long his debtor; for *then* I think of him, not only every day, but day and night, and indeed all day long. But I confess, at the same time, that my thoughts of you will be more pleasant to myself, when I shall have exonerated my conscience by giving you the letter, so long your due. Therefore, here it comes—little worth your having, but payment such as it is, that you have a right to expect, and that is essential to my own tranquillity. That the Iliad and Odyssey should have proved the occasion of my suspending my correspondence with you, is a proof how little we see the consequences of what we publish. Homer, I dare say, hardly at all suspected, that, at the fag end of time, two personages would appear, one

ycleped Sir Newton, and the other Sir Cowper, who loving each other heartily, would nevertheless suffer the pains of an interrupted intercourse—his poems the cause. So, however, it has happened; and though it would not, I suppose, extort from the old bard a single sigh, if he knew it, yet to me it suggests the serious reflection above mentioned. An author by profession had need narrowly to watch his pen, lest a line should escape it, which by possibility may do mischief, when he has been long dead and buried. What we have done when we have written a book, will never be known till the day of judgment: then the account will be liquidated, and all the good that it has occasioned, and all the evil, will witness either for or against us. I am now in the last book of the Odyssey, yet have still, I suppose, half a year's work before me. The accurate revisal of two such voluminous poems can hardly cost me less. I rejoice, however, that the goal is in prospect; for though it has cost me years to run this race, it is only now that I begin to have a glimpse of its termination.—That I shall never receive any proportionable pecuniary recompense for my long labors, is pretty certain; and as to any fame that I may possibly gain by it, that is a commodity that daily sinks in value, in measure as the consummation of all things approaches. In the day when the lion shall dandle the kid, and a little child shall lead them, the world will have lost all relish for the fabulous legends of antiquity, and Homer and his translator may budge off the stage together."

Some months afterwards, to the same correspondent Cowper thus writes:—"On this fine first of December, under an unclouded sky, and in a room full of sunshine, I address myself to the payment of a debt, long in arrear, but never forgotten by me, however I may have seemed to forget it. I will not waste time in apologies; I have but one, and that one will suggest itself unmentioned. I will only add that you are the first to whom I write, of several to whom I have not written many months, who all have claims upon me, and who, I flatter myself, are all grumbling at my silence. In your case, perhaps I have been less anxious than in the case of some others; because, if you have not heard from myself, you have heard from Mrs. Unwin. From her you have learned that I live, that I am as well as usual, and that I translate Homer—three short items, but in which is comprised the whole detail of my present history. Thus I fared when you were here; thus I have fared ever since you were here; and thus, if it please God, I shall continue to fare for some time longer: for, though the work is done, it is not finished—a riddle which you, who are a brother of the press, will solve easily. I have been the less anxious on your behalf, because I have had frequent opportunities to hear from you; and have always heard that you are in good health, and happy. Of Mrs. Newton, too, I have heard more favorable accounts of late, which has given us both the sincerest pleasure. Mrs. Unwin's case is, at present, my only subject of uneasiness, that is not immediately personal, and properly my own. She has almost constant head-aches, almost a constant pain in her side, which nobody understands, and her lameness, within the last half year, is very little amended. But her spirits are good, because supported by comforts which depend not on the state of the body: and I do not know that, with all her pain, her appearance is at all altered, since we had the happiness to see you here, unless indeed it be altered a little for the better. I have thus given you as circumstantial an account of ourselves as I could: the most interesting matter, I verily believe, with which I could have filled my paper, unless I could have made spiritual mercies to myself the subject.

In my next, perhaps I shall find time to bestow a few lines on what is doing in France and in the Austrian Netherlands; though, to say the truth, I am much better qualified to write an essay on the siege of Troy, than to discant on any of these modern revolutions. I question if, in either of the countries just mentioned, full of bustle and tumult as they are, there be a single character, whom Homer, were he living, would deign to make his hero. The populace are the heroes now, and the stuff of which gentlemen heroes are made, seems to be all expended."

The year 1790, found Cowper still indefatigably engaged in preparing his translation for the press. In a letter to Mrs. King, 4th January, he thus writes:—"Your long silence has occasioned me a thousand anxious thoughts about you. So long it has been, that whether I now write to a Mrs. King at present on earth, or already in heaven, I know not. I have friends whose silence troubles me less, though I have known them longer; because, if I hear not from themselves, I yet hear from others that they are still living, and likely to live. But if your letters cease to bring me news of your welfare, from whom can I gain the desirable intelligence? The birds of the air will not bring it, and third person there is none between us by whom it might be conveyed. Nothing is plain to me in this subject, but that either you are dead, or very much indisposed, or, which would perhaps affect me with as deep a concern, though of a different kind, very much offended. The latter of those suppositions I think the least probable, conscious as I am of an habitual desire to offend nobody, especially a lady, and a lady, too, who has laid me under so many obligations. But all the three solutions above mentioned are very uncomfortable; and if you live, and can send me one that will cause me less pain than either of them, I conjure you, by the charity and benevolence which I know influence you on all occasions, to communicate it without delay. It is possible, notwithstanding appearances to the contrary, that you are not become perfectly indifferent to me, and to what concerns me. I will, therefore, add a word or two on the subject which once interested you, and which is, for that reason, worthy to be mentioned, though truly for no other. I am well, and have been so (uneasiness on your part excepted) both in mind and body ever since I wrote to you last. I have still the same employment—Homer in the morning, and Homer in the evening, as constant as the day goes round. In the spring, I hope to send the Iliad and the Odyssey to the press. So much for me and my occupations."

It would scarcely be supposed that a person performing such an Herculean task as that of translating Homer, would have troubled himself to compose, or even to revise, a volume of hymns for children. The following extract, however, will show that, anxious as Cowper was to finish his Homer, he could nevertheless allow his attention to be, in a great measure, diverted from it, at least for a time, when he thought he could employ his talents usefully:—"I have long been silent, but you have had the charity, I hope and believe, not to ascribe my silence to a wrong cause. The truth is, I have been too busy to write to any body, having been obliged to give my early mornings to the revisal and correction of a little volume of hymns for children, written by I know not whom: this task I finished yesterday, and while it was in hand, wrote only to my cousin, and to her rarely. From her, however, I knew that you would hear of my well-being, which made me less anxious about my debts to you than I could have been otherwise. The winter has been mild; but our winters are in general such, that when a friend leaves us in the beginning of that season, I always feel in my heart a *perhaps*, importing that we may possibly have met for the last time, and that the robins may whistle on the grave of one of us before the return of summer. Though I have been employed as described above, I am still thrumming Homer's lyre, that is to say, I am still employed in my last revisal; and to give you some idea of the intenseness of my toils, I will inform you that it cost me all the morning yesterday, and all the evening, to translate a single simile to my mind. The transitions from one member of the subject to another, though easy and natural in the Greek, turn out often so intolerably awkward in an English version, that almost endless labor, and no little address, are requisite to give them grace and elegance. The under parts of the poem, (those, I mean, which are merely narrative,) I find the most difficult. These can only be supported by the diction, and on these, for that reason, I have bestowed the most abundant labor. Fine similes, and fine speeches, are more likely to take care of themselves; but the exact process of slaying a sheep and dressing it, is not so easy in our language, and in our measure, to dignify. But I shall have the comfort, as I before said, to reflect, that whatever may be hereafter laid to my charge, the sin of idleness wil. not—justly, at least, it never will. In the mean time, I must be allowed to say, that not to fall short of the original in every thing is impossible. I thank you for your German clavis, which has been of considerable use to me; I am indebted to it for a right understanding of the manner in which Achilles prepared pork, mutton, and goats' flesh, for the entertainment of his friends, on the night when they came deputed by Agamemnon to negotiate a reconciliation. A passage of which nobody in the world is perfectly master, myself only, and Schaulfelbergerus excepted, nor ever was, except when Greek was a living language."

About this time, Mrs. King appears to have been informed that it was Cowper's intention to leave Weston, and that Mrs. Unwin had been making inquiries after a house at Huntingdon. Adverting to this report, in a letter to that lady, he thus writes:—"The report that informed you of inquiries made by Mrs. Unwin, after a house at Huntingdon, was unfounded. We have no thought of quitting Weston, unless the same Providence that led us hither should lead us away. It is a situation the most eligible, perfectly agreeable to us both, and to me in particular, who write much, and walk much, and consequently love silence and retirement. If it has a fault, it is that it seems to threaten us with a certainty of never seeing you. But may we not hope that when a milder season shall have improved your health, we may yet, notwithstanding the distance, be favored with Mr. King's and your company? A better season will likewise improve the roads, and exactly in proportion as it does so, will, in effect, lessen the interval between us. I know not if Mr. Martyn be a mathematician, but most probably he is a good one, and he can tell you that this is a proposition mathematically true, though rather paradoxical in appearance."

In a letter to Mr. Newton, 5th February, 1790, Cowper again plaintively describes the state of his mind.—"Your kind letter deserved a speedier answer, but you know my excuse, which were I to repeat always, my letters would resemble the fag end of a newspaper, where we always find the price of stocks, detailed with little or no variation. When January returns, you have your feelings concerning me, and such as prove the faithfulness of your friendship. I have mine also concerning myself, but they are of a cast different from yours. Yours have a mixture of sympathy and tender solicitude, which makes them, perhaps, not altogether unplea-

sant. Mine, on the contrary, are of an unmixed nature, and consist, simply and merely, of the most alarming apprehensions. Twice has that month returned upon me, accompanied by such horrors, as I have no reason to suppose ever made part of the experience of any other man. I accordingly look forward to it, and meet it with a dread not to be imagined. I number the nights as they pass, and in the morning bless myself that another night is gone, and no harm has happened. This may argue, perhaps, some imbecility of mind, and indeed no small degree of it; but it is natural, I believe, and so natural as to be necessary and unavoidable. I know that God is not governed by secondary causes, in any of his operations; and that, on the contrary, they are all so many agents in his hand, which strike only when he bids them. I know, consequently, that one month is as dangerous to me as another; and that in the middle of summer, at noonday, and in the clear sunshine, I am, in reality, unless guarded by Him, as much exposed as when fast asleep at midnight, and mid-winter. But we are not always the wiser for our knowledge, and I can no more avail myself of mine, in this case, than if it were in the head of any other man, and not in my own. I have heard of bodily aches and ails, that have been particularly troublesome when the season returned in which the hurt that occasioned them was received. The mind, I believe, (with my own, however, I am sure it is so,) is liable to similar periodical affection. But February is come; January, my terror, is passed; and some shades of the gloom that attended his presence have passed with him. I look forward with a little cheerfulness to the buds and the leaves that will soon appear, and say to myself, till they turn yellow I will make myself easy. The year *will* go round, and January *will* approach. I *shall* tremble again, and I know it; but in the mean time I will be as comfortable as I can. Thus, with respect to peace of mind, such as it is, that I enjoy. I subsist, as the poor are vulgarly said to do, from hand to mouth; and of a Christian, such as you once knew me, am, by a strange transformation, become an epicurean philosopher, bearing this motto on my mind—*Quid sit futurum cras, fuge quærere.*"

Towards the end of this month, Cowper received as a present, from Mrs. Bobham, a cousin of his, then residing in Norfolk, his mother's portrait. The following extracts will show the powerful impression which this circumstance made upon his tender mind:—"My dearest Rose,* whom I thought withered and fallen from the stalk, but whom I find still alive: nothing could give me greater pleasure than to know it, and to learn it from yourself. I loved you dearly when you were a child, and love you not a jot the less for having ceased to be so. Every creature that bears any affinity to my mother is dear to me, and you, the daughter of her brother, are but one remove distant from her. I love you, therefore, and love you much, both for her sake, and for your own. The world could not have furnished you with a present so acceptable to me as the picture you have so kindly sent me. I received it the night before last, and received it with a trepidation of nerves and spirits, somewhat akin to what I should have felt had the dear original presented herself to my embraces. I kissed it, and hung it where it is the last object that I see at night, and, of course, the first that I open my eyes upon in the morning. She died when I had completed my sixth year, yet I remember her well, and am an ocular witness of the great fidelity of the copy. I remember too, a multitude of the maternal tendernesses which I received from her, and which have endeared her memory to me beyond expression. There is, I believe, in me, more of the Donne than of the Cowper, and though I love all of both names, and have a thousand reasons to love those of my own name, yet I feel the bond of nature draw me vehemently to your side. I was thought, in the days of my childhood, much to resemble my mother, and in my natural temper, of which, at the age of fifty-eight, I must be supposed a competent judge, can trace both her, and my late uncle, your father. Somewhat of his irritability, and a little, I would hope, both of his, and of her ——, I know not what to call it, without seeming to praise myself, which is not my intention; but speaking to *you*, I will even speak out, and say *good nature.* Add to all this, I deal much in poetry, as did our venerable ancestor, the Dean of St. Paul's, and I think I shall have proved myself a Donne at all points. The truth is, whatever I am, and wherever I am, I love you all."

To Lady Hesketh he thus adverts to the circumstance:—"I am delighted with Mrs. Bobham's kindness in giving me the only picture of my mother that is to be found, I suppose, in all the world. I had rather possess it than the richest jewel in the British crown, for I loved her with an affection, that her death, fifty years since, has not in the least abated. I remember her too, young as I was when she died, well enough to know that it is a very exact resemblance of her, and as such it is to me invaluable. Every body loved her, and with an amiable character so impressed on all her features, every body was sure to do so."

To John Johnson, Esq., 28th February, 1790, he thus records his feelings on this occasion. "I was never more pleased in my life than to learn, and to learn from herself, that my dearest Rose is still alive. Had she not engaged me to love her by the sweetness of her character when a child, she would have done it effectually now, by making me the most acceptable present in the world, my own dear mother's picture. I am perhaps the only person living who remembers her, but I remember her well, and can attest on my own knowledge, the truth of the resemblance. Amiable and elegant as the countenance is, such exactly was her own; she was one of the tenderest parents, and so just a copy of her, is therefore to me invaluable. I wrote yesterday to my Rose, to tell her all this, and to thank her for her kindness in sending it! Neither do I forget your kindness who intimated to her that I should be happy to possess it. She invites me into Norfolk, but alas! she might as well invite the house in which I dwell: for, all other considerations and impediments apart, how is it possible that a translator of Homer should lumber to such a distance? But though I cannot comply with her kind invitation, I have made myself the best amends in my power, by inviting her, and all the family of Donnes, to Weston." To Mrs. King, on the same interesting occasion, he writes: "I have lately received from a female cousin of mine in Norfolk, whom I have not seen these five-and-twenty years, a picture of my own mother. She died when I wanted two days of being six years old; yet I remember her perfectly, find the picture a strong resemblance of her, and because her memory has been ever precious to me, I have written a poem on the receipt of it; a poem which, one excepted, I had more pleasure in writing than any that I ever wrote. That one was addressed to a lady whom I expect in a few minutes to come down to breakfast, and who has supplied to me the place of my own mother—my own invaluable mother, these six-and-twenty years. Some

* Mrs. Bobham's name is Anne, but Cowper always called her Rose, when a child, and was aware that she would remember his doing so.

sons may be said to have had many fathers, but a plurality of mothers is not common."

In May of this year, 1790, Cowper thus describes the manner in which he was employed. "I am still at my old sport—Homer all the morning, and Homer all the evening. Thus have I been held in constant employment, I know not exactly how many, but I believe these six years, an interval of eight months excepted. It is now become so familiar to me to take Homer from my shelf at a certain hour, that I shall, no doubt, continue to take him from my shelf at the same time, even after I have ceased to want him. That period is not far distant. I am now giving the last touches to a work, which had I foreseen the difficulty of it, I should never have meddled with; but which, having at length nearly finished it to my mind, I shall discontinue with regret."

Perhaps no one was ever better qualified to give sound and judicious advice to persons in various conditions in life than Cowper, and no one certainly ever gave it more cheerfully, or in a manner more perfectly unassuming. An instance of this occurred in a letter which he wrote in June of this year, to his cousin, John Johnson, Esq., who was then pursuing his studies at Cambridge, who had recently been introduced to him, and for whom he entertained the most affectionate regard. "You never pleased me more than when you told me you had abandoned your mathematical pursuits. It grieved me to think that you were wasting your time merely to gain a little Cambridge fame; now scarcely worth your having. I cannot be contented that your renown should thrive nowhere but on the banks of the Cam. Conceive a nobler ambition, and never let your honer be circumscribed by the paltry dimensions of a University. It is well that you have already, as you observe, acquired sufficient information in that science to enable you to pass creditably such examinations as I suppose you must hereafter undergo. Keep what you have gotten, and be content: more is needless. You could not apply to a worse than I am, to advise you concerning your studies. I was never a regular student myself, but lost the most valuable part of my life in an attorney's office, and in the Temple. I will not therefore give myself airs and affect to know what I know not. The affair is of great importance to you, and you should be directed by a wiser than I. To speak, however, in very general terms on the subject, it seems to me that your chief concern is with history, natural philosophy, logic, and divinity; as to metaphysics, I know but little about them. But the very little I do know has not taught me to admire them. Life is too short to afford time even for serious trifles; pursue what you know to be attainable; make *truth* your object, and your studies will make you a wise man."

In the summer of 1790, much as Cowper's time was occupied in giving the finishing touch to his Homer, he nevertheless, at the suggestion of some friend, undertook to translate a series of Latin letters, received from a Dutch minister of the gospel, at the Cape of Good Hope. This occupation, though it left him but little time for writing to his numerous correspondents, afforded him considerable pleasure. There was a congeniality in it to the prevailing disposition of his mind, and in a letter to Mr. Newton, who requested him to publish these letters, he thus writes: "I have no objection at all to being known as the translator of Van Leer's Letters, when they shall be published. Rather, I am ambitious of it as an honor. It will serve to prove, that if I have spent much time to little purpose in the translation of Homer, some small portion of my time has, however, been well disposed of."

It will have been perceived, from the extracts we have already made, that Cowper's gloomy peculiarity of mind still prevailed, at least occasionally, to a painful extent. It is true, he adverts to it in his letters, at this time, less frequently than formerly; he introduces it, however, sufficiently often to show that it had undergone no diminution, and that it was suppressed only by the intense application which his engagements required. The following extracts from his letters written towards the close of 1790, will describe the state of his mind in this respect, at that period. "I have singularities of which, I believe, at present you know nothing; and which would fill you with wonder if you knew them. I will add, however, in justice to myself, that they would not lower me in your good opinion; though perhaps they might tempt you to question the soundness of my upper story. Almost twenty years have I been thus unhappily circumstanced; and the remedy is in the hands of God only. That I make you this partial communication on the subject, conscious at the same time that you are well worthy to be entrusted with the whole, is merely because the recital would be too long for a letter, and painful both to me and to you. But all this may vanish in a moment, and if it please God, it shall. In the mean time, my dear Madam, remember me in your prayers, and mention me at those times, as one whom it has pleased God to afflict with singular visitations. Twice I have been overwhelmed with the blackest despair; and at those times, every thing in which I have been at any time of my life concerned, has afforded to the enemy a handle against me. I tremble, therefore, almost at every step I take, lest on some future similar occasion, it should yield him opportunity, and furnish him with means to torment me."

On another occasion he thus writes: "A yellow shower of leaves is now continually falling from all the trees in the country. A few moments only seem to have passed since they were buds; and in a few moments more they will have disappeared! It is one advantage of a rural situation, that it affords many hints of the rapidity with which life flies, that do not occur in towns and cities. It is impossible for a man, conversant with such scenes as surround me, not to advert daily to the shortness of his existence here, admonished of it, as he must be, by ten thousand objects. There was a time when I could contemplate my present state, and consider myself as a thing of the day with pleasure; when I numbered the seasons, as they passed in swift rotation, as a school-boy numbers the days that interpose between the next vacation, when he shall see his parents, and enjoy his home again. But to make so just an estimate of a life like this, is no longer in my power. The consideration of my short continuance here, which was once grateful to me, now fills me with regret. I would live, and live always, and am become such another wretch as Mæcenas was, who wished for long life—he cared not at what expense of sufferings. The only consolation left me on this subject is, that the voice of the Almighty can, in one moment, cure me of this mental infirmity. That he can, I know by experience; and there are reasons for which I ought to believe that he will. But from hope to despair is a transition that I have made so often, that I can only consider the hope that may come, and that sometimes I believe will, as a short prelude to joy, to a miserable conclusion of sorrow that shall never end. Thus are my brightest prospects clouded; and thus, to me, is hope itself become like a withered flower, that has lost both its hue and its fragrance. I ought not to have written in this dismal strain to you, nor did I intend it; you have more need to be cheered than saddened; but a dearth of other themes constrained me to choose myself for a subject, and of myself I can write no otherwise."

Early in December, 1790, Cowper had a short but severe attack of that nervous fever to which he was very subject, and which he dreaded above all others, because it generally preceded a most severe paroxysm of melancholy. Happily, on this occasion, it lasted only for a short time; and in a letter to Mrs. King, dated the last day of the year, he thus records his feelings on the occasion:—"I have lately been visited with an indisposition much more formidable than that which I mentioned to you in my last—a nervous fever, a disorder to which I am subject, and which I dread above all others, because it comes attended by a melancholy perfectly insupportable. This is the first day of my complete recovery, the first in which I have perceived no symptoms of my terrible malady. I wish to be thankful to the Sovereign Dispenser both of health and of sickness, that, though I have felt cause enough to tremble, He gives me new encouragement to hope that I may dismiss my fears, and expect an escape from my depressive malady. The only drawback to the comfort I now feel, is in the intelligence contained in yours, that neither Mr. King nor yourself are well. I dread always, both for my own health and for that of my friends, the unhappy influences of a year worn out. But, my dear Madam, this is the last day of it, and I resolve to hope that the new year shall obliterate all the disagreeables of the old one. I can wish nothing more warmly, than that it may prove a propitious year for you."

In the autumn of this year Cowper had sent his "Homer" to the press; and through the whole of the ensuing winter he was closely employed in correcting the proof-sheets, and making such alterations as he still thought desirable. The time which this consumed, and the indefatigable industry with which he engaged in it, will be seen by the following extracts:—"My poetical operations, I mean of the occasional kind, have lately been pretty much at a stand. I told you, I believe, in my last, that 'Homer,' in the present stage of the process, occupied me more intensely than ever. He still continues to do so, and threatens, till he shall be completely finished, to make all other composition impracticable. I am sick and ashamed of myself that I forgot my promise, but it is actually true that I did forget it. You, however, I did not forget; nor did I forget to wonder and be alarmed at your silence, being myself perfectly unconscious of my arrears. All this, together with various other trespasses of mine, must be set down to the account of Homer; and, wherever he is, he is bound to make his apology to all my correspondents, but to you in particular. True it is, that if Mrs. Unwin did not call me from that pursuit, I should forget, in the ardor with which I persevere in it, both to eat and to drink, if not to retire to rest! This zeal has increased in me regularly as I have proceeded, and in an exact ratio, as a mathematician would say, to the progress I have made towards the point at which I have been aiming. You will believe this, when I tell you that, not contented with my previous labors, I have actually revised the whole work, and have made a thousand alterations in it since it has been in the press. I have now, however, tolerably well satisfied myself at least, and trust that the printer and I shall trundle along merrily to the conclusion."

In the commencement of 1791, Cowper's long-tried friend, Mr. Newton, lost his wife. She died sometime in January, after many months' severe suffering, borne with exemplary fortitude and patience. She had always taken a lively interest in Cowper's welfare; and, when she resided at Olney, had frequently assisted Mrs. Unwin in the arduous duty of watching over the poet, during his painful mental depression. Her decease, therefore, was sure to affect him deeply; and the following extracts from his letters to Mr. Newton, on this trying occasion, will not fail to be interesting:—"Had you been a man of the world, I should have held myself bound, by the law of ceremonies, to have sent you long since my tribute of condolence. I have sincerely mourned with you; and though you have lost a wife, and I only a friend, yet do I understand too well the value of such a friend as Mrs. Newton, not to have sympathized with you very nearly. But you are not a man of the world; neither can you, who have the Scripture, and the Giver of the Scripture to console you, have any need of aid from others, or expect it from such spiritual imbecility as mine."

"It affords me sincere pleasure that you enjoy serenity of mind, after your great loss. It is well in all circumstances, even in the most afflictive, with those who have God for their comforter. You do me justice in giving entire credit to my expressions of friendship for you. No day passes in which I do not look back to the days that are fled, and consequently none in which I do not feel myself affectionately reminded of you, and of her whom you have lost for a season. I cannot even see Olney spire from any of the fields in the neighborhood, much less can I enter the town, and still less the vicarage, without experiencing the force of those mementoes, and recollecting a multitude of passages to which you and yours were parties. The past would appear a dream, were the remembrance of it less affecting. It was, in the most important respects, so unlike my present moment, that I am sometimes almost tempted to suppose it a dream! But the difference between dreams and realities long since elapsed, seems to consist chiefly in this: that a dream, however painful or pleasant at the time, and perhaps for a few ensuing hours, passes like an arrow through the air, leaving no trace of its flight behind it; but our actual experiences make a lasting impression. We review those which interested us much when they occurred, with hardly less interest than in the first instance; and whether few years or many have intervened, our sensibility makes them still present—such a mere nullity is time, to a creature to whom God gives a feeling heart and the faculty of recollection!"

In June, 1791, having completed his long and arduous undertaking—the translation of "Homer," he thus writes to Mr. Newton on the occasion:—"Considering the multiplicity of your engagements, and the importance, no doubt, of most of them, I am bound to set the higher value on your letters; and, instead of grumbling that they come so seldom, to be thankful to you that they come at all. You are now going into the country, where I presume you will have less to do; and I am rid of "Homer;" let us try, therefore, if in the interval between the present hour and the next busy season (for I too, if I live, shall probably be occupied again,) we can contrive to exchange letters more frequently than for some time past. You do justice to me, and to Mrs. Unwin, when you assure yourself that to hear of your health, will give us pleasure. I know not, in truth, whose health and well-being could give us more. The years that we have seen together will never be out of our remembrance; and, so long as we remember them, we must remember you with affection. In the pulpit, and out of the pulpit, you have labored in every possible way to serve us; and we must have a short memory indeed for the kindness of a friend, could we by any means become forgetful of yours. It would grieve me more than it does, to hear you complain of the effects of time, were not I also myself the subject of them. While he is wearing out you and other dear friends of

mine, he spares not me; for which I ought to account myself obliged to him, since I should otherwise be in danger of surviving all that I have ever loved—the most melancholy lot that can befall a mortal. God knows what will be my doom hereafter; but precious as life necessarily seems to a mind doubtful of its future happiness, I love not the world, I trust, so much, as to wish a place in it when all my beloved shall have left it. As to Homer, I am sensible that, except as an amusement, he was never worth my meddling with; but, as an amusement, he was to me invaluable. As such, he served me more than five years; and in that respect I know not, at present, where I shall find his equal. You oblige me by saying, that you will read him for my sake. I verily believe that any person of a spiritual turn may read him to some advantage. He may suggest reflections that may not be unserviceable, even in a sermon: for I know not where we can find more striking examples of the pride, the arrogance, and the insignificance of man; at the same time that, by ascribing all events to a divine interposition, he inculcates constantly the belief of a Providence; insists much on the duty of charity towards the poor and the stranger: on the respect that is due to superiors, and to our seniors in particular; and on the expedience and necessity of prayer and piety towards the gods; a piety mistaken indeed in its object, but exemplary for the punctuality of its performance. Thousands who will not learn from Scripture to ask a blessing, either on their actions or on their food, may learn it, if they please, from Homer."

It appears from the above extract that Cowper had no expectations of again seeing his Homer until it was actually before the public. Johnson, the publisher, however, unexpectedly to him, sent him an interleaved copy, and recommended him to revise it again before it was fully committed to the press. On this occasion, he thus writes to his friend Mr. Newton:—"I did not foresee, when I challenged you to a brisker correspondence, that a new engagement of all my leisure time was at hand—a new, and yet an old one. An interleaved copy of my Homer arrived soon after from Johnson, in which he recommended it to me to make any alterations that might yet be expedient, with a view to another impression. The alterations that I make are, indeed, but few, and they are also short; not more, perhaps, than half a line in two thousand. But the lines are, I suppose, nearly forty thousand in all; and to revise them critically must consequently be a work of time and labor. I suspend it, however, for your sake, till the present sheet be filled, and that I may not seem to shrink from my own offer. Were I capable of envying, in the strict sense of the word, a good man, I should envy Mr. Venn, and Mr. Berridge, and yourself, who have spent, and while they last, will continue to spend, your lives in the service of the only Master worth serving; laboring always for the *souls* of men, and not to tickle their ears, as I do. But this I can say, God knows how much rather I would be the obscure tenant of a lath and plaster cottage, with a lively sense of my interest in a Redeemer, than the most admired object of public notice without it. Alas! what is a whole poem, even one of Homer's, compared with a single aspiration that finds its way immediately to God, though clothed in ordinary language, or perhaps, not articulated at all?—These are my sentiments as much as ever they were, though my days are all running to waste among Greeks and Trojans. The night cometh when no man can work; and if I am ordained to work to better purpose, that desirable period cannot be far distant. My day is beginning to shut in, as every man's must, who is on the verge of sixty."

CHAPTER XV.

Publication of his Homer. Anxiety respecting it. To whom dedicated. Benefits he had derived from it. Feels the want of employment. Prepares materials for a splendid edition of Milton's poetic works. Vindicates his character. Attempts of his friends to dissuade him from his new engagement. His replies. The commencement of his acquaintance with Mr. Haley. Pleasure it afforded Mr. Haley. Mrs. Unwin's first attack of paralysis. Manner in which it affected Cowper. Remarks on Milton's labors. Reply to Mr. Newton's letter for original composition. Continuance of his depression. First letter from Mr. Haley. Unpleasant circumstances respecting it. Mr. Haley's first visit to Weston. Kind manner in which he was received. Mrs. Unwin's second severe paralytic attack. Cowper's feelings on the occasion. Mr. Hayley's departure. Cowper's warm attachment to him. Reflections on the recent changes he had witnessed. Promises to visit Eartham. Makes preparations for the journey. Peculiarity of his feelings on the occasion.

On the first of July, 1791, Cowper's Homer appeared.—After so many years of incessant toil, it was not to be expected that he would feel otherwise than anxious respecting the reception it met with from the public. He had labored indefatigably to produce a faithful and free translation of the inimitable original, and he could not be indifferent to the result. To Mrs. King he thus writes on the occasion:—"My Homer is gone forth, and I can sincerely say—joy go with it! What place it holds in the estimation of the generality I cannot tell, having heard no more about it since its publication than if no such work existed. I must except, however, an anonymous eulogium from some man of letters, which I received about a week ago. It was kind in a perfect stranger, as he avows himself to be, to relieve me in some degree, at least, at so early a day, from much of the anxiety that I could not but feel on such an occasion: I should be glad to know who he is, only that I might thank him."

Cowper, very properly, dedicated the Iliad to his noble relative Earl Cowper, and the Odyssey to the dowager Countess Spencer, whom, in one of his letters he thus describes:—"We had a visit on Monday from one of the first women in the world—I mean in point of character and accomplishments—the dowager Lady Spencer! I may receive, perhaps, some honors hereafter, should my translation speed according to my wishes, and the pains I have taken with it; but shall never receive any that I esteem so highly; she is indeed, worthy, to whom I should dedicate, and may but my Odyssey prove as worthy of her, I shall have nothing to fear from the critics."

Whether it arose from the unreasonable expectations of the public, or from the utter impossibility of conveying all the graces and the beauties of these unrivalled poems, in a translation, it is certain that the volumes, when they appeared, did not give that satisfaction, either to the author, or to his readers, which had been anticipated. It would, perhaps, be difficult, if not impossible, to assign a better reason, for the imperfection of Cowper's translation, if imperfection it deserves to be called, than that mentioned by his justly admired biographer, Mr. Hayley.—"Homer is so exquisitely beautiful in his own language, and he has been so long an idol in every literary mind, that any copy of him, which the best of modern poets can execute, must probably resemble in its effect, the portrait of a graceful woman, painted by an excellent artist for her lover; the lover, indeed, will acknowledge great merit in the work, and think himself much indebted to the skill of such an artist, but he will never acknowledge, as in truth he never can feel, that the best resemblance exhibits all the graces that he discerns in the beloved original. So fares it with the admirers of Homer; his very translators themselves, feel so perfectly the power of this predominant affection, that they gra-

dually grow discontented with their own labor, however approved in the moment of its supposed completion. This was so remarkably the case with Cowper, that in process of time we shall see him employed upon what may almost be called his second translation, so great were the alterations he made in a deliberate revisal of the work, for a second edition. And in the preface to that edition, he has spoken of his own labor with the most frank and ingenuous veracity. Yet of his first edition it may, I think, be fairly said, that it accomplished more than any of his poetical predecessors had achieved before him. It made the nearest approach to that sweet majestic simplicity which forms one of the most attractive features in the great prince and father of poets."

If Cowper had derived no other benefit from his translation, than that of constant employment, for so long a time, when he stood so much in need of it, it would have been to him invaluable, as the best and most effectual remedy for that inordinate sensibility to which he was subject. Besides this, however, it procured him other advantages of paramount importance; it improved the general state of his health; it introduced him to a circle of literary friends, whom he would otherwise never have known, and who, when they once knew him, could not fail to feel affectionately interested in his welfare; it brought him into closer contact with those with whom he had previously been acquainted, by inducing him to avail himself of their kind offers and assistance in the transcribing way,* which to a mind like his could not fail to become a source of almost uninterrupted enjoyment; it established his reputation as a most accomplished scholar, and unquestionably ranked him among the highest class of poets.

A living writer has well remarked, that "to Cowper's translation of Homer, we are beholden, not only for the pleasure which a perusal will be sure to afford to reasonable and patient readers, but we may attribute to its happy possession of his mind all the beautiful and inimitable letters which appear in his correspondence, during the progress of that work. The toil of daily turning over the thoughts of the greatest of poets, in every form of English that his ingenuity could devise, occupied, for many years, that very portion of his time which, with a person of no profession, and having no stated duties to perform, lies heaviest upon the spirit. The salutary exercise of his morning studies made him relish with keener zest, the relaxation of his social hours, or those welcome opportunities of epistolary converse with the absent, in which it is evident that much of the little happiness allowed to him lay; he is never more at home, consequently never more amiable, sprightly, and entertaining, and even poetical, than in his correspondence, when he pours out all the treasures of his mind and the affections of his heart, upon the paper which is to be the speaking representative of himself to those he loves. It has often been regretted that instead of this labor in vain, as the translation of Homer has sometimes seemed to many, he had not spent an equal portion of time and talent on original composition. The regret is at least as much bestowed in vain, as was that labor, for there is no well-founded reason to suppose, from the momentary jeopardy in which he lived, of being plunged into sudden, irretrievable despondence, that if he had been otherwise employed, he could have maintained even that small share of health and cheerfulness which he enjoyed.

It is not to be expected that a mind like Cowper's could remain for any lengthened period unemployed. Accustomed as he had long been to intense application, when he had completed his great work, he immediately felt the want of some other engagement. To a mind less active than his, replying to his correspondents, which had now become most extensive, would have been employment amply sufficient—especially as he was considerably in arrears with them, owing to his previous labors. This, however, was not enough for Cowper. He wanted something more worthy of his powers; something that required more vigor of thought, and demanded more severe application. Several of his friends again urged him for original composition, and in all probability they would have been successful, had he not, about this time, received a letter from his publisher, of whose judgment and integrity he had always entertained a high opinion, recommending him to prepare materials for a splendid edition of Milton. To this proposal Cowper immediately assented. He had always expressed himself delighted with Milton's poetry, and on one occasion, in a letter to his friend Mr. Unwin, had thus ventured to defend his character from the severe censures cast upon him by Johnson, in his "Lives of the Poets:" "I have been well entertained with Johnson's biography, for which I thank you; with one exception, and that a swinging one, I think he has acquitted himself with his usual good sense and sufficiency. His treatment of Milton is unmerciful, to the last degree. He has belabored that great poet's character with the most industrious cruelty. As a man, he has hardly left him the shadow of one good quality. Churlishness in his private life, and a rancorous hatred of every thing royal in his public, are the two colors with which he has smeared all the canvas. If he had any virtues, they are not to be found in the Doctor's picture of him, and it is well for Milton, that some sourness in his temper is the only vice with which his memory has been charged: it is evident enough, that if his biographer could have discovered more, he would not have spared him. As a poet he has treated him with severity enough, and has plucked one or two of the most beautiful feathers out of his muse's wing, and trampled them under his great foot. He has passed sentence of condemnation upon Lycidas, and has taken occasion from that charming poem, to expose to ridicule (what is indeed ridiculous enough) the childish prattlings of pastoral compositions, as if Lycidas was the prototype and pattern of them all. The liveliness of the description, the sweetness of the numbers, the classical spirit of antiquity that prevails in it, go for nothing. I am convinced by the way, that he has no ear for poetical numbers, or that it was stopped by prejudice against the harmony of Milton's. Was there ever any thing so delightful as the music of the Paradise Lost? It is like that of a fine organ; has the fullest and the deepest tones of majesty, with all the softness and elegance of the Dorian flute. Variety without end, and never equalled, unless perhaps by Virgil. Yet the Doctor has little or nothing to say upon this copious theme, but talks something about the unfitness of the English language for blank verse, and how apt it is, in the mouth of some readers, to degenerate into declamation."

Cowper had no sooner made up his mind on the subject of his new engagement, than he communicated it to his correspondents. To one he writes, "I am deep in a new literary engagement, being retained by my bookseller as editor of an intended most magnificent edition of Milton's Poetical Works. This will occupy me as much as Homer

* It is said that Broome assisted Pope very largely in his *translation* of Homer; but Cowper had no assistant in that way. All the Throckmorton family, Lady Hesketh, Mrs. Johnson, and many others, helped him as transcribers, and only as such.

did, for a year or two to come; and when I have finished it, I shall have run through all the degrees of my profession, as author, translator, and editor. I know not that a fourth could be found; but if a fourth can be found, I dare say I shall find it. I am now translating Milton's Latin poems. I give them, as opportunity offers, all the variety of measure that I can. Some I render in heroic rhymes, some in stanzas, some in seven, some in eight syllable measure, and some in blank verse. They will altogether, I hope, make an agreeable miscellany for the English reader. They are certainly good in themselves, and cannot fail to please, but by the fault of their translator."

One of his most esteemed correspondents, the Rev. Walter Bagot, attempted to dissuade him from entering upon his new engagement, and urged him to publish in a third volume, what original pieces he had already composed, added to a translation of Milton's Latin and Italian poems. Had this plan been suggested to him earlier, he would, in all probability, have pursued it, as he thus writes to his friend on the subject:—"As to Milton, the die is cast. I am engaged, have bargained with Johnson, and cannot recede. I should otherwise have been glad to do as you advise, to make the translation of his Latin and Italian poems part of another volume, for with such an addition, I have nearly as much verse in my budget as would be required for the purpose."

From some expressions in a letter to the Rev. Mr. Hurdis, the author of the Village Curate, with whom Cowper had entered into a correspondence, a few months previous to this, and to whom he had written several most interesting letters, it would appear as if he entered upon his new engagement rather precipitately, and without due consideration. "I am much obliged to you for wishing that I were employed in some original work, rather than in translation. To tell the truth, I am of your mind; and unless I could find another Homer, I shall promise (I believe) and vow, when I have done with Milton, never to translate again. But my veneration for our great countryman is equal to what I feel for the Grecian; and consequently I am happy, and feel myself honorably employed, whatever I do for Milton. I am now translating his *Epitaphium Damonis;* a pastoral, in my judgment, equal to any of Virgil's Bucolics, but of which Dr. Johnson (so it pleased him) speaks, as I remember, contemptuously. But he who never saw any beauty in a rural scene, was not likely to have much taste for a pastoral. *In pace quiescat!*"

Among other consequences resulting from his new undertaking, one of the most gratifying to himself was, its becoming the means of introducing him to an acquaintance with his esteemed friend, and future biographer, Mr. Hayley. This important event in Cowper's life—so it afterwards proved—is related with so much beauty and simplicity by Mr. Hayley, in his life of Cowper, and reflects a lustre so bright on both the biographer and the poet, that we cannot do better than give it in his own words. Mr. Hayley thus relates the circumstance: "As it is to Milton that I am in a great measure indebted for what I must ever regard as a signal blessing, the friendship of Cowper, the reader will pardon me for dwelling a little on the circumstances that produced it—circumstances which often lead me to repeat those sweet verses of my friend, on the casual origin of our valuable attachments—

> 'Mysterious are His ways whose power
> Brings forth that unexpected hour,
> When minds that never met before
> Shall meet, unite, and part no more:
> It is the allotment of the skies,
> The hand of the supremely wise,
> That guides and governs our affections,
> And plans and orders our connections.'

"These charming lines strike with peculiar force on my mind, when I recollect that it was an idle endeavor to make us enemies which gave rise to our intimacy, and that I was providentially conducted to Weston at a season when my presence there afforded peculiar comfort to my affectionate friend, under the pressure of a very heavy domestic affliction which threatened to overwhelm his very tender spirits. The entreaty of many persons whom I wished to oblige, had engaged me to write a life of Milton, before I had the slightest suspicion that my work could interfere with the projects of any man; but I was soon surprised and concerned in hearing that I was represented in a newspaper as an antagonist of Cowper. I immediately wrote to him on the subject, and our correspondence soon endeared us to each other in no common degree. The series of his letters to me I value, not only as memorials of a most dear and honorable friendship, but as exquisite examples of epistolary excellence."

The above interesting extract will have informed the reader that Mr. Hayley paid Cowper a visit at Weston; this visit, however, so gratifying to both parties, did not take place till the beginning of May, 1792. In the December previous, Cowper met with one of the heaviest domestic calamities he had ever experienced. Mrs. Unwin, his affectionate companion, who had watched over him with so much tenderness and anxiety, for so many years, was suddenly attacked with strong symptoms of paralysis. In a letter to his friend, Mr. Rose, dated 21st December, 1791, Cowper thus relates this painful event:—"On Saturday last, while I was at my desk, near the window, and Mrs. Unwin at the fire-side opposite to it, I heard her suddenly exclaim, 'Oh! Mr. Cowper, don't let me fall!' I turned, and saw her actually falling, and started to her side just in time to prevent her. She was seized with a violent giddiness, which lasted, though with some abatement, the whole day, and was attended with some other very, very alarming symptoms. At present, however, she is relieved from the vertigo, and seems, in all respects, better. She has been my faithful and affectionate nurse for many years, and consequently has a claim on all my attentions. She has them, and will have them, as long as she wants them, which will probably be, at the least, a considerable time to come. I feel the shock, as you may suppose, in every nerve. God grant that there may be no repetition of it. Another such a stroke upon her would, I think, overset me completely; but, at present, I hold up bravely."

Notwithstanding the interruption of Cowper's studies, occasioned by Mrs. Unwin's indisposition, and by the extreme slowness of her recovery, he had now become so much accustomed to regular employment, and had derived from it so many advantages, that he could not possibly remain inactive. In the month of February we find him thus employed:—"Milton, at present, engrosses me altogether. His Latin pieces I have translated, and have begun with the Italian. These are few, and will not detain me long. I shall proceed immediately to deliberate upon, and to settle the plan of my commentary, which I have hitherto had but little time to consider. I look forward to it, for this reason, with some anxiety. I trust, at least, that this anxiety will cease, when I have once satisfied myself about the best manner of conducting it. But, after all, I seem to fear more the labor to which it calls, than any great difficulty with which it is likely to be attended.

To the labors of versifying I have no objection, but to the labors of criticism I am new, and apprehend that I shall find them wearisome. Should that be the case, I shall be dull, but must be contented to share the censure of being so, with almost all the commentators that have ever existed. I will, however, have no *horrida bella*, if I can help it. It is, at least, my present purpose to avoid them if possible; for which reason, I shall confine myself merely to the business of an annotator, which is my proper province, and shall sift out of Warton's notes every tittle that relates to the private character, political or religious principles of my author. These are properly subjects for a biographer's handling, but by no means, as it seems to me, for a commentator's."

In reply to a pressing letter from his friend, Mr. Newton, for original composition, written about this time, Cowper thus expresses himself:—"Your demand for more original composition from me will, if I live, and it please God to afford me health, in all probability, be sooner or later gratified. In the mean time you need not, and if you turn the matter over in your thoughts a little you will perceive that you need not, think me unworthily employed in preparing a new edition of Milton. His two principal poems are of a kind that call for an editor who believes the gospel, and is well grounded in evangelical doctrine. Such an editor they have never had, though only such an one can be qualified for the office."

The peculiarity of Cowper's religious feelings still continued to exist; and it seemed impossible for him to divest himself entirely of those gloomy apprehensions of his own personal interest in the blessings of the gospel, which had harrassed and distressed him for so many years. On every other subject he could write and converse, with ease to himself and with pleasure to others; but the morbid tendency of his mind to despondency, tinged all his remarks with midnight gloom whenever he adverted to this. An instance of this occurred in one of his letters to Mr. Newton about this time. After describing, in his own playful manner, some changes that had recently taken place in the circle of his immediate acquaintance, he thus closes his letter, which, notwithstanding the excellence of the remarks, evinces the existence of considerable depression:—"Such is this variable scene, so variable, that had the reflections I sometimes make upon it a permanent influence, I should tremble at the thought of a new connection, and to be out of the reach of its mutability, lead almost the life of a hermit. It is well with those, who, like you, have God for their companion; death cannot deprive them of *him*, and *he* changes not the place of his abode. Other changes, therefore, to them are all supportable; and what you say of your own experience is the strongest possible proof of it. Had you lived without God, *you* could not have endured the loss you mention. May he preserve *me* from a similar one, at least till he shall be pleased to draw me to himself again! Then, *if ever that day come*, it will make *me* equal to my burden; at present, I can bear nothing *well*. I, however, generally manage to pass my time comfortably, as much so, at least, as Mrs. Unwin's frequent indisposition, and my no less frequent troubles of mind, will permit. When I am much distressed, any company but her's distresses me more, and makes me doubly sensible of my sufferings, though sometimes, I confess, it falls out otherwise; and by the help of more general conversation, I recover that elasticity of mind which is able to resist the pressure. On the whole, I believe I am situated exactly as I should wish to be, were my situation determined by my own election; and am denied no comfort that is compatible with the *total absence* of the chief of all. I rejoiced, and had great reason to do so, in your coming to Weston, for I think the Lord came with you. Not, indeed, to *abide* with me, nor to restore me to that intercourse which I had with him, and which I enjoyed twenty years ago, but to awaken in me, however, more spiritual feeling than I have experienced, except in two instances, all that time. The comforts that I had received under your ministry in better days, all rushed upon my recollection; and, during two or three transient moments, seemed to be in a degree renewed. You will tell me that, transient as they were, they were yet evidences of a love that is not so; and I am desirous to believe it."

We have already informed our readers that Cowper's engagement as the editor of Milton became the means of introducing him to Mr. Hayley. He received the first letter from that gentleman in March, 1792. An incident occurred respecting this letter which ought not to go unrecorded; as it might have proved fatal to that friendship, which became to both the poets a source of the purest enjoyment. Neither of these talented individuals had, at that time, any knowledge of each other. Mr. Hayley had read Cowper's productions with no ordinary emotions of delight, and had consequently conceived the highest respect for their unknown author; and nothing could have occasioned him greater surprise, as well as uncasiness, than to be represented as the opponent of one whom he so highly respected. No sooner was he apprized of it than he wrote to Cowper, generously offering him any materials that he had collected, with as much assistance as it was in his power to afford, and being unacquainted with his address, directed his letter to the care of Johnson, his publisher. Either through the carelessness or inadvertence of Johnson, this letter remained in his hands for a considerable time, and was not delivered to Cowper till six weeks after it had been written. Immediately on receiving it, Cowper wrote to Mr. Hayley, explaining the cause of his long-delayed reply; and from that time, an interchange of many most interesting letters took place, which subsequently led to a friendship the most cordial and ardent, which it was only in the power of death to dissolve. In a letter to Lady Hesketh, Cowper thus adverts to this circumstance:—"Mr. Hayley's friendly and complimentary letter, from some unknown cause, at least to me, slept six weeks in Johnson's custody. It was necessary I should answer it without delay: accordingly I answered it the very evening on which I received it, giving him to understand, among other things, how much vexation the bookseller's folly had cost me, who had detained it so long, especially on account of the distress that I knew it must have occasioned to him also. From his reply, which the return of the post brought me, I learn that in the long interval of my non-correspondence he had suffered anxiety and mortification enough; so much so that I dare say he made twenty vows never to hazard again either letter or compliment to an unknown author. What, indeed, could he imagine less, than that I meant by such obstinate silence to tell him that I valued neither him nor his praises, nor his proffered friendship; in short, that I considered him as a rival, and, therefore, like a true author, hated and despised him. He is now, however, convinced that I love him, as indeed I do, and I account him the chief acquisition that my verse has ever procured me. Brute should I be if I did not, for he promises me every assistance in his power."

To Mr. Hayley, at the commencement of Cowper's correspondence with him, and after the above unpleasant occurrence had been satisfactorily accounted for, and amicably settled, he thus expresses his anxiety that the friendship thus formed might

be lasting:—"God grant that this friendship of ours may be a comfort to us all the rest of our days, in a world where true friendships are rarities, and especially where, suddenly formed, they are apt soon to terminate. But, as I said before, I feel a disposition of heart towards you that I never felt for one whom I had never seen; and that shall prove itself, I trust, in that event, a propitious omen. It gives me the sincerest pleasure that I hope to see you at Weston: for as to any migrations of mine, they must, I fear, notwithstanding the joy I should feel in being a guest of yours, be still considered in the light of impossibilities. Come, then, my friend, and be welcome, as the country people say here, as the flowers in May. I am happy, I say, in the expectation, but the fear or rather the consciousness, that I shall not answer on a nearer view, makes a trembling kind of happiness, and invests it with many doubts. Bring with you any books that you think may be useful to my commentatorship, for with you for an interpreter, I shall be afraid of none of them. And in truth if you think you shall want them, you must bring books for your own use also, for they are an article with which I am *heinously unprovided*; being much in the condition of the man whose library Pope describes, as—

"No mighty store!
His own works neatly bound, and little more."

Mr. Hayley's projected visit, anticipated so fondly, both by himself and by Cowper, took place in May, 1792. The interview between these talented individuals proved reciprocally delightful. Though Cowper was now in his sixty-first year, he felt none of the infirmities of advanced life, but was as active and vigorous, both in mind and body, as his best friends could wish him. Mrs. Unwin had nearly recovered from her late severe attack, and as her health was every day progressively improving, there seemed every probability of their enjoying a long continuance of domestic comfort. Mr. Hayley thus describes the manner in which he was received, and his sensations on the occasion:—"Their reception of me was kindness itself; I was enchanted to find that the manners and conversation of Cowper resembled his poetry, charming by unaffected elegance, and the graces of a benevolent spirit. I looked with affectionate veneration and pleasure on the lady, who, having devoted her life and fortune to the service of this tender and sublime genius, in watching over him with maternal vigilance, through so many years of the darkest calamity, appeared to be now enjoying a reward justly due to the noblest exertions of friendship, in contemplating the health, and the renown of the poet, whom she had the happiness to preserve. It seemed hardly possible to survey human nature in a more touching, and a more satisfactory point of view. Their tender affection to each other, their simple, devout gratitude for the mercies which they had experienced together, and their constant but unaffected propensity to impress on the mind and heart of a new friend, the deep sense which they incessantly felt, of their mutual obligations to each other; afforded me very singular gratification."

This scene of exquisite enjoyment to all parties, as is frequently the case in a world like ours, was suddenly exchanged for one of the deepest melancholy and distress. Mr. Hayley has related the painful event with so much tenderness and simplicity, that we cannot do better than to present it to our readers in his own words:—"After passing our morning in social study, we usually walked out together at noon; in returning from one of our rambles round the pleasant village of Weston, we were met by Mr. Greathead, an accomplished minister of the gospel, who resides at Newport Pagnel, and whom Cowper described to me in terms of cordial esteem. He came forth to meet us, as we drew near the house, and it was soon visible from his countenance and manner, that he had ill news to impart. After the most tender preparation that humanity could devise, he informed Cowper that Mrs. Unwin was under the immediate pressure of a paralytic attack. My agitated friend rushed to the sight of the sufferer; he returned to me in a state that alarmed me in the highest degree for his faculties: his first speech was wild in the extreme; my answer would appear little less so, but it was addressed to the predominant fancy of my unhappy friend, and with the blessing of heaven, it produced an instantaneous calm in his troubled mind. From that moment he rested on my friendship with such mild and cheerful confidence, that his affectionate spirit regarded me as sent providentially to support him in a season of the severest affliction."

The best means to promote the recovery of Mrs. Unwin, that could have been used under similar circumstances, were resorted to. Happily, they proved to a considerable degree successful, and she gradually recovered both her strength and the use of her faculties. The effect of this attack, however, upon Cowper's tender mind, was in the highest degree painful. This will not perhaps be surprising, when it is recollected how sincerely he was attached to his afflicted inmate, and how deeply he interested himself in every thing that related to her welfare. The following beautiful lines will convey to the reader some idea of the exalted opinion he had formed of her character:

"Mary! I want a lyre with other strings,
Such aid from heaven as some have feigned they drew,
An eloquence scarce give to mortals, new
And undebased by meaner things!
That ere through age or wo I shed my wings,
I may record thy worth, with honor due
In verse as musical as thou art true—
Verse that immortalizes whom it sings!
But thou hast little need: there is a book,
By seraphs writ, with beams of heavenly light,
On which the eyes of God not rarely look!
A chronicle of actions just and bright!
There all thy deeds, my faithful Mary, shine,
And since thou own'st that praise, I spare thee mine."

The following extracts from Cowper's correspondence, immediately after this painful event, describe satisfactorily the state of his mind:—"I wish with all my heart, my dearest cousin, that I had not ill news for the subject of this letter: my friend, my Mary, has again been attacked by the same disorder that threatened me last year with the loss of her, of which you were yourself a witness. The present attack has been much the severest. Her speech has been almost unintelligible from the moment that she was struck: it is with difficulty she can open her eyes; and she cannot keep them open, the muscles necessary for that purpose being contracted; and as to self-moving powers from place to place, and the right use of her hand and arm, she has entirely lost them. I hope, however, she is beginning to recover: her amendment is indeed but very slow, as must be expected at her time of life. I am as well myself, and indeed better than you have ever known me in such trouble. It has happened well for me that, of all men living, the man best qualified to assist and comfort me, is here; though, till within these few days, I never saw him, and a few weeks since had no expectation that I ever should. You have already guessed that I mean Hayley—Hayley, who loves me as if he had known me from my cradle. When

he returns to town, as he must, alas! he will pay his respects to you. He has, I assure you, been all and all to us, on this very afflictive occasion. Love him, I charge you, dearly, for my sake. Where could I have found a man, except himself, so necessary to me, in so short a time, that I absolutely know not how to live without him?"

Mr. Hayley left Weston early in June, at which time many pleasing symptoms of Mrs. Unwin's ultimate recovery began to appear. Cowper's letters to his friend after his departure, which were written almost daily, afford ample proofs of the warmth of his affection for him, and of the deep interest he took in promoting Mrs. Unwin's recovery. He thus commences his first letter to Mr. Hayley:—"ALL'S WELL! which words I place as conspicuously as possible, and prefix them to my letter, to save you the pain, my friend and brother, of a moment's anxious speculation. Poor Mary proceeds in her amendment, and improves, I think, even at a swifter rate than when you left her. The stronger she grows, the faster she gathers strength, which is perhaps the natural course of recovery. Yesterday was a noble day with her; speech, almost perfect—eyes, open almost the whole day, without any effort to keep them so—and her step, wonderfully improved! Can I ever honor you enough for your zeal to serve me? Truly I think not. I am, however, so sensible of the love I owe to you on this account, that I every day regret the acuteness of your feelings for me, convinced that they expose you to so much trouble, mortification, and disappointment. I have, in short, a poor opinion of my destiny, as I told you when you were here; and though I believe, if any man here can do me good, you will, I cannot yet persuade myself that even you will be successful in attempting it. But it is no matter: you are yourself a good which I can never value enough; and, whether rich or poor in other respects, I shall always account myself better provided for than I deserve, with such a friend as you, that I can call my own. Let it please God to continue to me my William and Mary, and I shall be more reasonable than to grumble. I rose this morning, wrapt around with a cloud of melancholy, and with a heart full of fears; but if I see my Mary's amendment a little advanced, I shall be better."

"Of what materials can you suppose me made, if, after all the rapid proofs you have given me of your friendship, I do not love you with all my heart, and regret your absence continually. But you must permit me to be melancholy now and then; or, if you will not, I must be so without permission; for that sable thread is so interwoven with the very thread of my existence as to be inseparable from it, at least while I exist in the body. Be content, therefore: let me sigh and groan, but always be sure that I love you. You will be well assured that I should not have indulged myself in this rhapsody about myself and my melancholy, had my present state of mind been of that complexion, or had not our poor Mary seemed still to advance in her recovery. It is a great blessing to us both, that, feeble as she is, she has a most invincible courage, and a trust in God's goodness that nothing shakes. She is certainly, in some degree, better than she was yesterday; but how to measure the degree I know not, except by saying—that it is just perceptible."

In a letter dated 11th June, 1792, Cowper thus discloses his state of mind to Lady Hesketh:—"My dearest cousin, thou art ever in my thoughts, whether I am writing to thee or not, and my correspondence seems to grow upon me at such a rate, that I am not able to address thee so often as I would. In fact, I live only to write letters. Hayley is, as you see, added to the number of my correspondents, and to him I write almost as duly as I rise in the morning. Since I wrote last, Mrs. Unwin has been continually improving in strength, but at so gradual a rate, that I can only mark it by saying that she moves every day with less support than the former. On the whole, I believe she goes on as well as can be expected, though not quite so well as to satisfy me."

"During the last two months I seem to myself to have been in a dream. It has been a most eventful period, and fruitful to an uncommon degree, both in good and in evil. I have been very ill, and suffered excruciating pain: I recovered, and became quite well again. I received within my doors a man, but lately an entire stranger, and who now loves me as his brother, and forgets himself to serve me. Mrs. Unwin has been seized with an illness, that for many days threatened to deprive me of her, and to cast a gloom, an impenetrable one, on all my future prospects. She is now granted to me again. A few days since I should have thought the moon might have descended into my purse as likely as any emolument, and now it seems not impossible. All this has come to pass with such rapidity as events move with in romance indeed, but not often in real life. Events of all sorts creep or fly, exactly as God pleases."

While Mr. Hayley was at Weston, he had persuaded Cowper and Mrs. Unwin to promise him a visit at Eartham, some time in the summer; believing that it would greatly improve Mrs. Unwin's health, and be an agreeable relaxation to Cowper, after the anxiety of mind he had felt respecting his esteemed invalid. Mr. Hayley wrote several pressing invitations to induce them to come as early as possible. The following extracts will show the state of Cowper's mind respecting it. To Mr. Bull he writes, "We are on the eve of a journey, and a long one. On this very day se'nnight we set out for Eartham, the seat of my brother bard, Mr. Hayley, on the other side of London, nobody knows where, a hundred and twenty miles off. Pray for us, my friend, that we may have a safe going and return. It is a tremendous exploit, and I feel a thousand anxieties when I think of it. But a promise made to him when he was here, that we would go if we could, and a sort of persuasion that we can if we will, oblige us to it. The journey and the change of air, together with the novelty to us of the scene to which we are going, may, I hope, be useful to us both; especially to Mrs. Unwin, who has most need of restoratives."

To Mr. Newton he thus discloses his feelings on the subject. "You may imagine that we, who have been resident in one spot for so many years, do not engage in such an enterprise without some anxiety. Persons accustomed to travel would make themselves merry with mine; it seems so disproportioned to the occasion. Once I have been on the point of determining not to go, and even since we fixed the day, my troubles have been almost insupportable. But it has been made a matter of much prayer, and at last it has pleased God to satisfy me, in some measure, that his will corresponds with our purpose, and that he will afford us his protection. You, I know, will not be unmindful of us during our absence from home; but will obtain for us, if your prayers can do it, all that we would ask for ourselves—the presence and favor of God, a salutary effect of our journey, and a safe return."

Anxious to enjoy the pleasure of Cowper's company at Eartham, Mr. Hayley, in his letters to the poet, urged him, by no means to defer his visit till late in the summer. From Cowper's replies we select the following interesting extracts:—"The weather is sadly against my Mary's recovery; it deprives her of many a good turn in the orchard, and fifty

times have I wished this very day, that Dr. Darwin's scheme of giving rudders and sails to the icelands, that spoil all our summers, were actually put into practice. So should we have gentle airs instead of churlish blasts, and those everlasting sources of bad weather, being once navigated into the southern hemisphere, my Mary would recover as fast again. We are both of your mind respecting the journey to Eartham, and think that July, if by that time she have strength for the journey, will be better than August. This, however, must be left to the Giver of all Good. If our visit to you be according to his will, he will smooth our way before us, and appoint the time of it; and I thus speak, not because I wish to seem a saint in your eyes, but because my poor Mary actually is one, and would not set her foot over the threshold, unless she had, or thought she had, God's free permission. With that she would go through floods and fire, though without it she would be afraid of every thing—afraid even to visit you, dearly as she loves, and much as she longs to see you."

In another letter to Mr. Hayley, he writes, "The progress of the old nurse in Terence is very much like the progress of my poor patient in the road to recovery. I cannot indeed say that she moves but advances not, for advances are certainly made, but the progress of a week is hardly perceptible. I know not, therefore, at present, what to say about this long postponed journey; the utmost that it is safe for me to say at this moment, is this—you know that you are dear to us both: true it is that you are so, and equally true, that the very instant we feel ourselves at liberty, we will fly to Eartham. You wish me to settle the time, and I wish with all my heart so to do; living in hopes, meanwhile, that I shall be able to do it soon. But some little time must necessarily intervene. Our Mary must be able to walk alone, to cut her own food, and to feed herself, and to wear her own shoes, for at present she wears mine. All these things considered, my friend and brother, you will see the expediency of waiting a little before we set off to Eartham. We mean, indeed, before that day arrives, to make a trial of her strength; how far she may be able to bear the motion of a carriage, a motion that she has not felt these seven years. I grieve that we are thus circumstanced, and that we cannot gratify ourselves in a delightful and innocent project, without all these precautions; but when we have leaf-gold to handle, we must do it tenderly."

The day was at length fixed for this long-intended journey; and the following letter to Mr. Hayley, written a day or two previously, describes Cowper's feelings respecting it:

"Through floods and flames to your retreat
I win my desp'rate way,
And when we meet, if e'er we meet,
Will echo your huzza!

"You will wonder at the word *desperate* in the second line, and at the *if* in the third; but could you have any conception of the fears that I have had to bustle with, of the dejection of spirits I have suffered concerning this journey, you would wonder much that I still courageously persevere in my resolution to undertake it. Fortunately for my intention, it happens that as the day approaches my terrors abate; for had they continued to be what they were a week ago, I must, after all, have disappointed you; and was actually once on the verge of doing it. I have told you something of my nocturnal experiences, and assure you now, that they were hardly ever more terrific than on this occasion. Prayer has, however, opened my passage at last, and obtained for me a degree of confidence, that I trust will prove a comfortable viaticum to me all the way. The terrors that I have spoken of, would appear ridiculous to most, but to you they will not, for you are a reasonable creature, and know well that to whatever cause it be owing, (whether to constitution or God's express appointment,) I am hunted by spiritual hounds in the night season. I cannot help it. You will pity me, and wish it were otherwise, and though you may think there is much of the imaginary in it, will not deem it, for that reason, an evil less to be lamented. So much for fears and distresses. Soon I hope they will all have a joyful termination, and I and my Mary be skipping with delight at Eartham."

The protracted indisposition of Mrs. Unwin, and the preparation which Cowper thought it necessary to make for his journey, had entirely diverted his mind from his literary undertaking. To Mr. Hayley, on this point, he thus writes:—"I know not how you proceed in your Life of Milton, but I suppose not very rapidly, for while you were here, and since you left us, you have had no other theme but me. As for myself, except my letters, and the nuptial song I sent you in my last, I have literally done nothing, since I saw you. Nothing, I mean, in the writing way, though a great deal in another; that is to say, in attending my poor Mary, and endeavoring to nurse her up for a journey to Eartham. In this I have hitherto succeeded tolerably well, and I had rather carry this point completely, than be the most famous editor of Milton the world has ever seen, or shall see. As to this affair, I know not what will become of it. I wrote to Johnson a week since, to tell him that the interruption of Mrs. Unwin's illness still continued, and being likely to continue, I knew not when I should be able to proceed. The translations I said were finished, except the revisal of a part. I hope, or rather wish, that at Eartham I may recover that habit of study, which, inveterate as it once seemed, I now seem to have lost—lost to such a degree, that it is even painful for me to think of what it will cost me to acquire it again."

About this time, at the request of a much esteemed relative, Cowper sat to Abbot, the painter, for his portrait; and the following playful manner in which he adverts to the circumstance, exhibits the peculiarity of his case, and shows, that though he was almost invariably suffering under the influence of deep depression, he frequently wrote to his correspondents in a strain the most sprightly and cheerful:—"How do you imagine I have been occupied these last ten days? In sitting, not on cockatrice eggs, nor yet to gratify a mere idle humor, nor because I was too sick to move, but because my cousin Johnson has an aunt who has a longing desire of my picture, and because he would, therefore, bring a painter from London to draw it. For this purpose I have been sitting, as I say, these ten days; and am heartily glad that my sitting time is over. The likeness is so strong, that when my friends enter the room where the picture is, they start, astonished to see me where they know I am not.

Abbot is painting me so true,
That (trust me) you would stare,
And hardly know, at the first view,
If I were here, or there.

Miserable man that you are, to be at Brighton, instead of being here to contemplate this prodigy of art, which, therefore, you can never see, for it goes to London next Monday to be suspended awhile at Abbot's and then proceeds to Norfolk, where it will be suspended for ever."

CHAPTER XVI.

Journey to Eartham. Incidents of it. Safe arrival. Description of its beauties. Employment there. Reply to a letter from Mr. Hurdis, on the death of his sister. State of Cowper's mind at Eartham. His great attention to Mrs. Unwin. Return to Weston. Interview with General Cowper. Safe arrival at their beloved retreat. Violence of his depressive malady. Regrets the loss of his studious habit. Ineffectual efforts to obtain it. Warmth of his affection for Mr. Hayley. Dread of January. Prepares for a second edition of Homer. Commences writing notes upon it. Labor it occasioned him. His close application. Continuance of his depression. Judicious consolatory advice he gives to his friends. Letter to Rev. J. Johnson on his taking orders. Pleasure it afforded him to find that his relative entered upon the work with suitable feelings. Reply to Mr. Hayley respecting a joint literary undertaking.

Cowper and Mrs. Unwin set out for Eartham in the beginning of August, 1792. It pleased God to conduct them thither in safety; and though considerably fatigued with their journey, they were much less so than they had anticipated. Cowper's letters to his friends after his arrival describe his feelings on the occasion, in a manner the most pleasing:—"Here we are, at Eartham, in the most elegant mansion that I have ever inhabited, and surrounded by the most beautiful pleasure-grounds that I have ever seen; but which, dissipated as my powers of thought are at present, I will not undertake to describe. It shall suffice me to say, that they occupy three sides of a hill, which in Buckinghamshire might well pass for a mountain, and from the summit of which is beheld a most magnificent landscape, bounded by the sea, and in one part by the Isle of Wight, which may also be seen plainly from the window of the library, in which I am writing. It pleased God to carry us both through the journey with far less difficulty and inconvenience than I expected; I began it indeed with a thousand fears, and when we arrived the first evening at Barnet, found myself oppressed in spirit to a degree that could hardly be exceeded. I saw Mrs. Unwin weary, as well she might be, and heard such noises, both within the house and without, that I concluded she would get no rest. But I was mercifully disappointed. She rested, though not well, yet sufficiently. Here we found our friend Rose, who had walked from his house in Chancery-lane, to meet us, and to greet us with his best wishes. At Kingston, where we dined the second day, I found my old and much valued friend, General Cowper, whom I had not seen for thirty years, and but for this journey should never have seen again. When we arrived at Ripley, where we slept the second night, we were both in a better condition of body and of mind than on the day preceding. Here we found a quiet inn, that housed, as it happened, that night, no company but ourselves: we slept well and rose perfectly refreshed, and, except some terrors that I felt at passing over the Sussex Hills at moonlight, met with little to complain of, till we arrived, about ten o'clock, at Eartham. Here we are as happy as it is in the power of earthly good to make us. It is almost a paradise in which we dwell; and our reception has been the kindest that it was possible for friendship and hospitality to contrive."

While at Eartham, Cowper and Mr. Hayley employed the morning hours that they could bestow upon books, in revising and correcting Cowper's translation of Milton's Latin and Italian poems. In the afternoon, they occasionally amused themselves by forming together a rapid metrical version of Andreini's Adamo. Cowper's tender solicitude for Mrs. Unwin, however, rendered it impossible for them to be very attentive to these studies. Adverting to the anxiety of Cowper respecting Mrs. Unwin, Mr. Hayley thus writes:—"I have myself no language sufficiently strong or sufficiently tender, to express my just admiration of that angelic, compassionate sensibility with which Cowper watched over his aged invalid. With the most singular and most exemplary tenderness of attention, he incessantly labored to counteract every infirmity, bodily and mental, with which sickness and age had conspired to load the interesting guardian of his afflicted life."

Cowper had been at Eartham but a few days, when he received a letter from his friend, Mr. Hurdis, informing him of the loss he had sustained by the death of a beloved sister. His compassionate heart immediately prompted him to write the following reply:—"Your kind, but very affecting letter, found me not at Weston, to which place it was directed, but in a bower of my friend Hayley's garden, at Eartham, where I was sitting with Mrs. Unwin. We both knew, the moment we saw it, from whom it came, and observing a red seal, both comforted ourselves that all was well at Burwash; but we soon felt that we were called not to rejoice, but to mourn with you: we do, indeed, sincerely mourn with you; and, if it will afford you any consolation to know it, you may be assured that every eye here has testified what our hearts have suffered for you. Your loss is great, and your disposition, I perceive, such as exposes you to feel the whole weight of it. I will not add to your sorrow by a vain attempt to assuage it; your own good sense, and the piety of your principles, will, of course, suggest to you the most powerful motives of acquiescence in the will of God. You will be sure to recollect, that the stroke, severe as it is, is not the stroke of an enemy, but of a Friend and a Father; and will find, I trust, hereafter, that like a Father he has done you good by it. Thousands have been able to say, and myself as loud as any of them, it has been good for me that I have been afflicted; but time is necessary to work us to this persuasion, and in due time it will, no doubt, be yours."

The following extracts from letters to Lady Hesketh, dated Eartham, describe his feelings while he remained there:—"I know not how it is, my dearest cousin, but in a new scene like this, surrounded by strange objects, I find my powers of thinking dissipated to a degree that makes it difficult for me even to write a letter, and even a letter to you; but such a letter as I can, I will, and I have the fairest chance to succeed this morning—Hayley, Romney, and Hayley's son, being all gone to the sea for bathing. The sea, you must know, is nine miles off, so that, unless stupidity prevent, I shall have opportunity to write, not only to you, but to poor Hurdis also, who is broken-hearted for the loss of his favorite sister, lately dead. I am, without the least dissimulation, in good health; my spirits are about as good as you have ever seen them; and if increase of appetite, and a double portion of sleep, be advantageous, such are the benefits I have received from this migration. As to that gloominess of mind which I have felt these twenty years, it cleaves to me even here; and could I be translated to paradise, unless I left my body behind me, would cleave to me even there also. It is my companion for life, and nothing will ever divorce us. Mrs. Unwin is evidently the better for her jaunt, though by no means as she was before her last attack, still wanting help when she would rise from her seat, and a support in walking, but she is able to take more exercise than when at home, and move with rather a less tottering step. God knows what he designs for me; but when I see those who are dearer to me than myself, distempered and enfeebled, and myself as strong as in the days of my youth, I tremble for the solitude in which a few years may place *me*."

"This is, as I have already told you, a delightful place: more beautiful scenery I have never beheld, nor expect to behold: but the charms of it, uncom-

mon as they are, have not, in the least, alienated my affections from Weston. The genius of that place suits me better; it has an air of snug concealment, in which a disposition like mine feels peculiarly gratified; whereas here, I see from every window woods like forests, and hills like mountains, a wilderness in short that rather increases my natural melancholy, and which, were it not for the agreeables I find within, would convince me that mere change of place can avail but little."

On the 17th September, 1792, Cowper and Mrs. Unwin left Eartham for their beloved retreat at Weston. Their parting interview with their friends at Eartham, who had heaped upon them every thing that the most affectionate kindness could invent, was deeply interesting to all parties, but particularly affecting to the sensitive mind of Cowper. According to a previous arrangement, the poet and Mrs. Unwin dined, and spent the day with General Cowper, at Kingston, who had come there on purpose to have the pleasure of Cowper's company, probably for the last time. A recollection of this so powerfully affected the poet's mind, that the pleasure of the interview was hardly greater than the pain he felt at parting with his venerable and beloved kinsman. The peculiar and burdened state of Cowper's mind respecting this visit, he thus describes:—"The struggles that I had with my own spirit, laboring as I did, under the most dreadful dejection, are never to be told. I would have given the world to have been excused. I went, however, and carried the point against myself, with a heart riven asunder. I have reasons for all this anxiety, which I cannot relate now; the visit, however, passed off well, and I returned with a lighter heart than I have known since my departure from Eartham, and we both enjoyed a good night's rest afterwards."

The good providence of God conducted these interesting travellers in safety to their home, where they arrived in the evening of the second day after they set out from Eartham. The unusual excitement occasioned by so long a journey, and by such a profusion of interesting objects, would in ordinary cases, and in minds of almost any form, who had been so long confined to one spot, be very likely to be succeeded by considerable depression. Such was, however, much more likely to be the case on a mind like Cowper's. Accordingly we find, that when he arrived at Weston, he was for a considerable time, subject to an unusual degree of depression. The following extracts from his letters to his friend Hayley, describe the state of his mind, and show how much he was then under the influence of his depressive malady:—"Chaos, himself, even the chaos of Milton, is not surrounded with more confusion, nor has a mind more completely in a hubbub, than I experience at the present moment. A bad night, succeeded by an east wind, and a sky all in sables, have such an effect on my spirits, that if I did not consult my own comfort more than yours, I should not write to-day, for I shall not entertain you much: yet your letter, though containing no very pleasant tidings, has afforded me some relief. It tells me, indeed, that you have been dispirited yourself; all this grieves me, but then there is a warmth of heart, and a kindness in it, that do me good. I will endeavor to repay you in notes of sorrow and despondence, though all my sprightly chords seem broken. In truth, one day excepted, I have not seen the day when I have been cheerful since I left you. My spirits, I think, are almost constantly lower than they were; the approach of winter is perhaps the cause, and if it be, I have nothing better to expect for a long time to come. I began a long letter to you yesterday, and proceeded through two sides of the sheet, but so much of my nervous fever found its way into it, that, looking over it this morning, I determined not to send it. Your wishes to disperse my melancholy would, I am sure, prevail, did that event depend on the warmth and sincerity with which you frame them; but it has baffled both wishes and prayers, and those the most fervent that could be made, so many years, that the case seems hopeless."

These frequent, and, indeed, almost continual attacks of depression, combined with the attention that Cowper paid to promote the comfort, and facilitate the recovery of Mrs. Unwin, prevented him entirely from persevering in his literary undertaking. In his letters he makes this a subject of particular regret. The benefits he had derived from his regular habits of study during his translation of Homer, made him anxious to be again regularly employed. To his friend Mr. Rose he thus describes the state of his mind in this respect:—"I wish that I were as industrious, and as much occupied as you, though in a different way, but it is not so with me. Mrs. Unwin's great debility is of itself a hinderance, such as would effectually disable me. Till she can work and read, and fill up her time as usual, (all which is at present entirely out of her power,) I may now and then find time to write a letter, but I shall write nothing more. I cannot sit, with my pen in my hand, and my books before me, while she is in effect, in solitude, silent, and looking at the fire. To this hinderance that other has been added, of which you are aware, a want of spirits, such as I have never known when I was not absolutely laid by, since I commenced an author. How long I shall be continued in these uncomfortable circumstances is known only to Him, who, as he will, disposes of us all.

"I may yet be able, perhaps, to prepare the first book of Paradise Lost for the press, before it will be wanted, and Johnson himself seems to think there will be no haste for the second. But poetry is my favorite employment, and my poetical operations are in the meantime suspended; for while a work, to which I have bound myself, remains unaccomplished, I can do nothing else. Johnson's plan of prefixing my phiz to the edition of my poems is by no means a pleasant one to me, and so I told him in a letter I sent him from Eartham, in which I assured him that my objections to it would not be easily surmounted. But, if you judge that it may really have an effect in advancing the sale I would not be so squeamish as to suffer the spirit of prudery to prevail on me to his disadvantage. Somebody told an author, I forget whom, that there was more vanity in refusing his picture than in granting it, on which he instantly complied. I do not perfectly feel all the force of the argument, but it shall content me that he did."

To his kinsman he writes:—"The successor of the clerk defunct, for whom I used to write, arrived here this morning, with a recommendatory letter from Joe Rye, and an humble petition of his own, entreating me to assist him, as I had assisted his predecessor. I have undertaken the service, although with no little reluctance, being involved in many arrears on other subjects, and very little dependence at present on my ability to write at all. I proceed exactly as when you were here—a letter now and then before breakfast, and the rest of my time all holiday, if holiday it may be called, that is spent chiefly in moping and musing, and '*forecasting the fashion of uncertain evils.*' The fever on my spirits has harassed me much, and I have never had so good a night, nor so quiet a rising, since you went, as on this very morning. A relief that I account particularly seasonable and propitious, because I had, in my intentions, devoted this morning to you, and could not have fulfilled those intentions,

had I been as spiritless as I generally am. I am glad that Johnson is in no haste for Milton, for I seem myself not likely to address myself presently to that concern with any prospect of success, yet something, now and then, like a secret whisper, assures and encourages me that it will yet be done."

To his friend Hayley he thus writes:—"Yesterday was a day of assignation with myself, a day of which I had said, some days before it came, when that day comes, I will, if possible, begin my dissertations. Accordingly, when it came, I prepared to do so; filled a letter case with fresh paper, furnished myself with a pretty good pen, and replenished my ink bottle; but partly from one cause, and partly from another, chiefly, however, from distress and dejection, after writing and obliterating about six lines, in the composition of which I spent near an hour, I was obliged to relinquish the attempt. An attempt so unsuccessful could have no other effect than to dishearten me, and it has had that effect to such a degree, that I know not when I shall find courage to make another. At present I shall certainly abstain from it, since I cannot well afford to expose myself to the danger of a fresh mortification."

Adverting to this subject, he thus again writes to Mr. Hayley, 25th November, 1792:—"How shall I thank you enough for the interest you take in my future Miltonic labors, and the assistance you promise me in the performance of them? I will some time or other, if I live, and live a poet, acknowledge your friendship in some of my best verses—the most suitable return one poet can make another; in the mean time, I love you, and am sensible of all your kindness. You wish me warm in my work, and I ardently wish the same, but when I shall be so, God only knows. My melancholy, which seemed a little alleviated for a few days, has gathered about me again, with as black a cloud as ever; the consequence is, absolute incapacity to begin. Yet I purpose, in a day or two, to make another attempt, to which, however, I shall address myself with fear and trembling, like a man, who having sprained his wrist, dreads to use it. I have not, indeed, like such a man, injured myself by any extraordinary exertion, but seem as much enfeebled as if I had. The consciousness that there is so much to do, and nothing done, is a burden I am not able to bear. Milton, especially, is my grievance, and I might almost as well be haunted by his ghost, as goaded with continual reproaches for neglecting him. I will therefore begin; I will do my best, and if, after all, that best prove good for nothing, I will even send the notes, worthless as they are, that I have already—a measure very disagreeable to myself, and to which nothing but necessity shall compel me."

To his friend, Mr. Newton, who had ventured to express his apprehension lest his Miltonic labors should become too severe, he thus writes, 9th December, 1792:—"You need not be uneasy on the subject of Milton; I shall not find that labor too heavy for me, if I have health and leisure. The season of the year is unfavorable to me respecting the former, and Mrs. Unwin's present weakness allows me less of the latter than the occasion seems to call for. But the business is in no haste: the artists employed to furnish the embellishments are not likely to be very expeditious: and a small portion only of the work will be wanted from me at once, for the intention is to deal it out to the public piece-meal. I am, therefore, under no great anxiety on that account. It is not, indeed, an employment that I should have chosen for myself, because poetry pleases and amuses me more, and would cost me less labor, properly so called. All this I felt before I engaged with Johnson, and did, in the first instance, actually decline the service, but he was urgent, and at last I suffered myself to be persuaded. The season of the year, as I have already said, is particularly adverse to me, yet not in itself, perhaps, more adverse than any other; but the approach of it always reminds me of the same season in the dreadful seventy-three, and the more dreadful eighty-six. I cannot help terrifying myself with doleful misgivings and apprehensions; nor is the enemy negligent to seize all the advantage that the occasion gives him. Thus, hearing much from him, and having little or no sensible support from God, I suffer inexpressible things till January is over. And even then—whether increasing years have made me more liable to it; or despair, the longer it lasts, grows naturally darker—I find myself more inclined to melancholy than I was a few years since. God only knows where this will end; but where it is likely to end, unless he interpose powerfully in my favor, all may know."

On another occasion, to the same correspondent, he again writes:—"Oh, for the day when your expectations of my final deliverance shall be verified! At present it seems very remote—so distant, indeed, that hardly the faintest streak of it is visible in my horizon. The glimpse with which I was favored about a month ago, has never been repeated, but the depression of my spirits has. The future appears as gloomy as ever, and I seem to myself to be scrambling always in the dark, among rocks and precipices, without a guide, but with an enemy ever at my heels, prepared to push me headlong. Thus I have spent twenty years, but thus I shall not spend twenty years more: long before that period arrives, the grand question concerning my everlasting weal or wo will be decided."

To a lady, with whom he occasionally corresponded, he thus discloses his feelings:—"I would give you consolation, madam, were I not disqualified for that delightful service by a great dearth of it in my own experience. I too often seek, but cannot find it. I know, however, there are seasons when, look which way we will, we see the same dismal gloom enveloping all objects. This is itself an affliction; and the worse, because it makes us think ourselves more unhappy than we are. I was struck by an expression in your letter to Hayley, where you say that you 'will endeavor to take an interest in green leaves again.' This seems the sound of my own voice reflected to me from a distance; I have so often had the same thought and desire. A day scarcely passes, at this season of the year, when I do not contemplate the trees as soon to be stript, and say, 'perhaps I shall never see you clothed again.' Every year, as it passes, makes this expectation more reasonable; and the year with me cannot be very distant, when the event will verify it. Well, may God grant us a good hope of arriving, in due time, where the leaves never fall, and all will be right!"

Notwithstanding his gloomy forebodings, Cowper escaped any very severe attack of depression in his dreaded month of the ensuing January, and as the spring advanced, he became as busily engaged as he had ever been, partly in his Miltonic labors, but chiefly in preparing materials for a second edition of Homer. He had long been carefully revising the work, and had judiciously availed himself of the remarks of his friends, as well as of the criticisms of the reviewers. As soon, therefore, as it was determined to republish it, he made the best use of these materials, and in a few weeks prepared the work a second time for the press, in its new and much improved form. It was, however, thought advisable, in the second edition, to publish notes for the assistance of unlearned readers; and the labor

and research required to furnish these, occasioned Cowper much severe application, as the following extracts will show:—19th March, 1793. "I am so busy every morning before breakfast, strutting and stalking in Homeric stilts, that you must account it an instance of marvellous grace and favor that I write even to you. Sometimes I am seriously almost crazed with the multiplicity of matters before me, and the little or no time that I have for them; and sometimes I repose myself after the fatigue of that distraction, on the pillow of despair—a pillow which has often served me in time of need, and is become, by frequent use, if not very comfortable, at least convenient. So reposed, I laugh at the world and say—Yes, you may gape, and expect both Homer and Milton from me, but I'll be hanged if ever you get them. In Homer, however, you must know I am advanced as far as the fifteenth book of the Iliad, leaving nothing behind that can reasonably offend the most fastidious; and I design him for a new dress as soon as possible, for a reason which any poet may guess if he will but thrust his hand into his pocket. My time, therefore, the little that I have, is now so entirely engrossed by Homer, that I have at this time a bundle of unanswered letters by me, and letters likely to be so. Thou knowest, I dare say, what it is to have a head weary with thinking: mine is so fatigued by breakfast-time, three days out of four, that I am utterly incapable of sitting down to my desk again for any purpose whatever. I rise at six every morning, and fag till near eleven, when I breakfast; the consequence is, that I am so exhausted as to be unable to write when the opportunity offers. You will say, breakfast before you work, and then your work will not fatigue you. I answer, perhaps I might, and your counsel would probably prove beneficial; but I cannot spare a moment for eating in the early part of the morning, having no other time for study: all this time is constantly given to Homer, not to correcting and amending him, for that is all over, but in writing notes. Johnson has expressed a wish for some, that the unlearned may be a little illuminated concerning classical story, and the mythology of the ancients; and his behavior to me has been so liberal, that I can refuse him nothing. Poking into the old Greek commentators, however, blinds me. But it is no matter, I am the more like Homer. I avail myself of Clarke's excellent annotations, from which I select such as I think likely to be useful, or that recommend themselves by the amusement they afford, of which sorts there are not a few. Barnes also affords me some of both kinds, but not so many, his notes being chiefly paraphrastical or grammatical. My only fear is, lest between them both, I should make my work too voluminous."

In a letter to Mr. Newton, written 12th June, 1793, Cowper thus expresses himself respecting the state of his own mind, and that of Mrs. Unwin:—"You promise to be contented with a short line, and a short one you must have, hurried over in the little interval I have happened to find, between the conclusion of my morning task and breakfast. Study has this good effect, at least—it makes me an early riser, a wholesome practice from which I have never swerved since March. The scanty opportunity I have, I shall employ in telling you what you principally wish to be told, the present state of mine and Mrs. Unwin's health. In her I cannot perceive any alteration for the better; and must be satisfied, I believe, as indeed I have great reason to be, if she does not alter for the worse. She uses the orchard-walk daily, but always supported between two, and is still unable to employ herself as formerly. But she is cheerful, seldom in much pain, and has always strong confidence in the mercy and faithfulness of God. As to myself, I have invariably the same song to sing—well in body, but sick in spirit; sick nigh unto death.

> 'Seasons return, but not to me returns
> God, or the sweet approach of heavenly day,
> Or sight of cheering truth, or pardon seal'd,
> Or joy, or hope, or Jesus' face divine,
> But clouds or ——.'

I could easily set my complaint to Milton's tone, and accompany him through the whole passage on the subject of a blindness more deplorable than his; but time fails me."

During this year, several of Cowper's correspondents were visited either with domestic affliction, or with painful bereavements. On such occasions, all the sensibility and sympathy of his peculiarly tender mind never failed to be called into lively exercise. The deep depression of his own mind did not deter him from attempting, at least, to alleviate the distress of others. To Mr. Hayley, who had recently lost a friend, he thus writes:—"I truly sympathize with you under your weight of sorrow, for the loss of our good Samaritan. But be not broken-hearted my friend: remember, the loss of those we love is the condition on which we live ourselves; and that he who chooses his friends wisely, from among the excellent of the earth, has a sure ground to hope concerning them when they die, that a merciful God will make them far happier than they could be here, and that we shall join them soon again: this is solid comfort, could we but avail ourselves of it, but I confess the difficulty of doing so always. Sorrow is like the deaf adder, that hears not the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely: and I feel so myself for the death of Austen, that my own chief consolation is that I had never seen him. Live yourself, I beseech you, for I have seen so much of you, that I can by no means spare you, and I will live as long as it shall please God to permit. I know you set some value upon me, therefore let that promise comfort you, and give you not reason to say, like David's servants, 'We know that it would have pleased thee more if all we had died, than this one, for whom thou art inconsolable.' You have still Romney, and Carwardine, and Grey, and me, and my poor Mary, and I know not how many beside—as many I suppose as ever had an opportunity of spending a day with you. He who has the most friends, must necessarily lose the most; and he whose friends are numerous as yours, may the better spare a part of them. It is a changing, transient scene: yet a little while and this poor dream of life will be over with all of us. The living, and they who live unhappy, they are indeed the subjects of sorrow."

To his esteemed friend, Rev. Mr. Hurdis, who, as above related, had lost one beloved sister, and was in great danger of losing another, he thus writes, June, 1793:—"I seize a passing moment, merely to say that I feel for your distresses, and sincerely pity you, and I shall be happy to learn from your next that your sister's amendment has superseded the necessity you feared of a journey to London. Your candid account that your afflictions have broken your spirits and temper, I can perfectly understand, having labored much in that fire myself, and perhaps more than any man. It is in such a school that we must learn, if we ever truly learn it, the natural depravity of the human heart, and of our own in particular, together with the consequence that necessarily follows such wretched premises—our indispensable need of the atonement, and our inexpressible obligations to Him who made it. This reflection cannot escape a thinking mind, looking back on those ebullitions of fretfulness and impatience to which it has yielded in a season of great affliction."

Early in the spring of this year, 1793, Cowper's esteemed relative, Rev. John Johnson, after much mature and solemn deliberation, had resolved to take holy orders. Cowper had always regarded him with the most paternal affection, and had wished that he should enter upon the important office of a Christian minister, with a high sense of the greatness of the work, and with suitable qualifications for a proper discharge of its solemn duties. In accordance with these wishes, when Mr. Johnson, in a previous year, had relinquished his intentions of taking orders at that time, Cowper had thus addressed him:—"My dearest of all Johnnys, I am not sorry that your ordination is postponed. A year's learning and wisdom, added to your present stock, will not be more than enough to satisfy the demands of your function. Neither am I sorry that you find it difficult to fix your thoughts to the serious point at all times. It proves, at least, that you attempt, and wish to do it, and these are good symptoms. Wo to those who enter on the ministry of the gospel without having previously asked, at least, from God, a mind and spirit suited to their occupation, and whose experience never differs from itself, because they are always alike vain, light, and inconsiderate. It is therefore matter of great joy to me to hear you complain of levity, as it indicates the existence of anxiety of mind to be freed from it."

The gratification it afforded Cowper to find that his beloved relative entered into the ministry with scriptural views and feelings is thus expressed:—"What you say of your determined purpose, with God's help, to take up the cross, and despise the shame, gives us both great pleasure: in our pedigree is found one, at least, who did it before you. Do you the like, and you will meet him in heaven, as sure as the Scripture is the word of God. The quarrel that the world has with evangelical men and doctrines, they would have with a host of angels in human form, for it is the quarrel of owls with sunshine; of ignorance with divine illumination. The Bishop of Norwich has won my heart by his kind and liberal behavior to you, and if I knew him I would tell him so. I am glad that your auditors find your voice strong, and your utterance distinct; glad, too, that your doctrine has hitherto made you no enemies. You have a gracious Master, who, it seems, will not suffer you to see war in the beginning. It will be a wonder, however, if you do not find out, sooner or later, that sore place in every heart, which can ill endure the touch of apostolic doctrine. Somebody will smart in his conscience, and you will hear of it. I say not this to terrify you, but to prepare you for what is likely to happen, and which, troublesome as it may prove, is yet devoutly to be wished; for, in general, there is little good done by preachers till the world begins to abuse them. But understand me right. I do not mean that you should give them unnecessary provocation, by scolding and railing at them, as some, more zealous than wise, are apt to do. That were to deserve their anger. No: there is no need of it. The self-abasing doctrines of the gospel will, of themselves, create you enemies; but remember this for your comfort—they will also, in due time, transform them into friends, and make them love you as if they were your own children. God give you many such: as, if you are faithful to his cause, I trust he will."

About this time, Mr. Hayley appears to have applied to Cowper for his assistance, in a joint literary undertaking of some magnitude, with himself and two other distinguished literary characters. Anxious, however, as Cowper was on all occasions to oblige his friend, he could not give his consent to this measure. His reply, given partly in poetry and partly in prose while it shows the peculiar state of his mind, exhibits, at the same time, so much of that amiable modesty by which he was always distinguished, that it cannot be read without interest.

"Dear architect of fine *chateaux* in air,
Worthier to stand for ever if they could,
Than any built of stone, or yet of wood,
For back of royal elephant to bear!
Oh, for permission from the skies to share,
Much to my own, though little to thy good,
With thee (not subject to the jealous mood!)
A partnership of literary ware!
But I am bankrupt now, and doomed henceforth
To drudge in descant dry, on other's lays—
Bards, I acknowledge, of unequall'd worth!
But what is commentator's happiest praise?
That he has furnished lights for other eyes,
Which they who need them use, and then despise.

"What remains for me to say on this subject, my dear brother, I will say in prose. There are other impediments to the plan you propose, which I could not comprise within the bounds of a sonnet. My poor Mary's infirm condition makes it impossible for me, at present, to engage in a work such as you propose. My thoughts are not sufficiently free; nor have I, nor can I, by any means find opportunity; added to it, comes a difficulty which, though you are not at all aware of it, presents itself to me under a most forbidding appearance. Can you guess it? No, not you: neither, perhaps, will you be able to imagine that such a difficulty can possibly exist. If your hair begins to bristle, stroke it down again; for there is no need why it should erect itself. It concerns me, not you. I know myself too well not to know that I am nobody in verse, unless in a corner and alone, and unconnected in my operations. This is not owing to want of love to you, my brother, or the most consummate confidence in you—I have both in a degree that has not been exceeded in the experience of any friend you have or ever had. But I am so made up—I will not enter into a philosophical analysis of my strange constitution, in order to detect the true cause of the evil; but, on a general view of the matter, I suspect that it proceeds from that shyness which has been my effectual and almost total hinderance on many other important occasions, and which I should feel, I well know, on this, to a degree that would perfectly cripple me. No! I shall neither do nor attempt any thing of consequence more, unless my poor Mary get better; nor even then, unless it should please God to give me another nature. I could not thus act in concert with any man, not even with my own father or brother, were they now alive! Small game must serve me at present, and till I have done with Homer and Milton. The utmost that I aspire to, and Heaven knows with how feeble a hope, is to write, at some future and better opportunity, when my hands are free, *The Four Ages*. Thus I have opened my heart unto thee." On another occasion he thus plaintively writes:—"I find that much study fatigues me, which is a proof that I am somewhat stricken in years. Certain it is, that ten or sixteen years ago I could have done as much, and did actually do much more, without suffering the least fatigue, than I can possibly accomplish now. How insensibly old age steals on us, and how often it is actually arrived before we suspect it! Accident alone; some occurrence that suggests a comparison of our former with our present selves, affords the discovery. Well, it is always good to be undeceived, especially in an article of such importance."

To a person less intimately acquainted with Cowper than Mr. Hayley was, the above reply would have been amply sufficient to have prevented him from making any further application of a similar nature. He, however, was not to be thus easily di-

verted from his purpose. Of the talents of Cowper he had justly formed the highest opinion, and had wisely concluded, that if they could only be again brought fairly and fully into exercise, in the composition of original poetry, the result would be every thing that could be wished. Immediately, therefore, on receiving the above letter, he proffered Cowper his own assistance, and the assistance of two other esteemed friends, in composing the projected poem, "The Four Ages," and proposed that it should be their joint production. His principal object was, unquestionably, to induce Cowper to employ his unrivalled talents. The pleasure he anticipated in having such a coadjutor, gratifying as it must have been to his feelings, was only a secondary consideration. Averse as Cowper was to the former proposal, he immediately consented to this, and the following extract will show what were his feelings on the occasion:—"I am in haste to tell you how much I am delighted with your projected quadruple alliance, and to assure you that, if it please God to afford me health, spirits, ability, and leisure, I will not fail to devote them all to the production of my quota in "The Four Ages." You are very kind to humor me as you do, and had need be a little touched yourself with all my oddities, that you may know how to administer to mine. All whom I love do so, and I believe it to be impossible to love heartily those who do not. People must not do me good in *their* way, but in my *own*, and then they do me good indeed. My pride, my ambition, and my friendship for you, and the interest I take in my own dear self, will all be consulted and gratified, by an arm-in-arm appearance with you in public; and I shall work with more zeal and assiduity at Homer; and when Homer is finished, at Milton, with the prospect of such a coalition before me. I am at this moment, with all the imprudence natural to poets, expending nobody knows what, in embellishing my premises, or rather the premises of my neighbor Courtenay, which is more poetical still. Your project, therefore, is most opportune, as any project must needs be, that has so direct a tendency to put money into the pocket of one so likely to want it.

> "Ah, brother poet! send me of your shade,
> And bid the zephyrs hasten to my aid;
> Or, like a worm unearthed at noon, I go,
> Despatched by sunshine to the shades below"

It is deeply to be regretted that the pleasing anticipations of both Mr. Hayley and Cowper, respecting this joint production, were never realized. Had this poem been written, it would in all probability, have been equal to any that had ever been published. Cowper was, however, at this time, rapidly sinking into that deep and settled melancholy which it now becomes our painful duty to relate, and in which he continued during the remaining period of his life, notwithstanding the united and indefatigable exertions of his friends to afford him relief.

CHAPTER XVII.

Mr. Hayley's second visit to Weston. Finds Cowper busily engaged. Great apprehensions respecting him. Mrs. Unwin's increasing infirmities. Cowper's feelings on account of it. Vigor of his own mind at this period. Severe attack of depression. Deplorable condition to which he was now reduced. Management of his affairs kindly undertaken by Lady Hesketh. Mr. Hayley's anxieties respecting him. Is invited by Mr. Greathead to pay Cowper another visit. Complies with the invitation. Arrival at Weston. How he is received by Cowper. Inefficiency of the means employed to remove his depression. Handsome pension allowed him by His Majesty. His removal from Weston to Norfolk, under the care of the Rev. J. Johnson. Death of Mrs. Unwin. How it affected Cowper. Recovers sufficiently to resume his application to Homer. Finishes his notes. Letter to Lady Hesketh descriptive of his feelings. Composes some original poems. Translates some of Gay's fables into Latin. Rapid decay of his strength. Last illness. Death.

In the beginning of November, 1793, Mr. Hayley made his second visit to Weston. He found Cowper in the enjoyment of apparent health; and though incessantly employed, either on Homer or Milton, pleasing himself with the society of his young kinsman, from Norfolk, and his esteemed friend Mr. Rose, who had arrived from the seat of Lord Spencer, in Northamptonshire, with an invitation from his Lordship to Cowper and his guests, to pay him a visit. All Cowper's friends strongly recommended him to avail himself of this mark of respect from an accomplished nobleman whom he cordially respected. Their entreaties, however, were entirely in vain; his constitutional shyness again prevailed, and he commissioned his friends, Rose and Hayley, to make an apology to his Lordship, for declining so honorable an invitation.

The manner in which Cowper employed his time during the continuance of his friend Mr. Hayley at Weston, is pleasingly described in the following extract from a letter to Mrs. Courtenay, 4th November, 1793:—"I am a most busy man, busy to a degree that sometimes half distracts me; but if complete distraction be occasioned by having the thoughts too much and too long attached to any single point, I am in no danger of it, with such perpetual whirl are mine whisked about from one subject to another. When two poets meet, there are fine doings, I can assure you. My 'Homer' finds work for Hayley, and his 'Life of Milton' work for me; so that we are neither of us one moment idle. Poor Mrs. Unwin in the mean time sits quiet in her corner, occasionally laughing at us both, and not seldom interrupting us with some question or remark, for which she is continually rewarded by me with a 'hush!' Bless yourself, my dear Catherina, that you are not connected with a poet, especially that you have not two to deal with!"

During Mr. Hayley's visit, he saw, with great concern, that the infirmities of Mrs. Unwin were rapidly sinking her into a state of the most pitiable imbecility. Unable any longer to watch over the tender health of him whom she had guarded for so many years, and unwilling to relinquish her authority, her conduct at this period presented that painful spectacle, which we are occasionally called to witness, of declining nature seeking to retain that power which it knows not how to use nor how to resign. The effect of these increasing infirmities on her whom Cowper justly regarded as the guardian of his life, added to apprehensions which he now began to feel that his increasing expenses, occasioned by Mrs. Unwin's protracted illness, would involve him in difficulties, filled him with the greatest uneasiness; and the depressing influence it had upon his mind, became painfully evident to all his friends. So visibly was such the case, that Mr. Hayley felt fully persuaded that, unless some speedy and important change took place in Cowper's circumstances, his tender mind would inevitably sink under the multiplicity of its cares. To effect this desirable object, as far as was in his power, he embraced the earliest opportunity, after leaving Weston, of having an interview with Lord Spencer, and of stating to him the undisguised condition of the afflicted poet. His lordship entered feelingly into the case, and shortly afterwards mentioned it to his majesty. It was owing to this that his majesty, some time afterwards, granted to Cowper such a pension as was sufficient to secure to him a comfortable competence for the remainder of his life. It is, however, deeply to be regretted that this seasonable and well-merited bounty was not received till the poet's mind was enveloped in that midnight gloom from which it never afterwards wholly emerged.

The increasing infirmities of Mrs. Unwin did not, in the slightest degree, diminish Cowper's regard for her; on the contrary, they seemed rather

to augment it, as the following beautiful poem, written about this time, will show:—

TO MARY.

"The twentieth year is well nigh past
Since first our sky was overcast,
And would that this might be the last,
My Mary!
Thy spirits have a fainter glow;
I see thee daily weaker grow;
'Twas my distress that brought thee low,
My Mary!
Thy needles, once a shining store,
For my sake restless heretofore;
Now rust disused, and shine no more,
My Mary!
For though thou gladly wouldst fulfil
The same kind office for me still,
Thy sight now seconds not thy will
My Mary!
But well thou play'dst the huswife's part,
And all thy threads, with magic art,
Have wound themselves about my heart,
My Mary!
Thy indistinct expressions seem
Like language uttered in a dream;
Yet me they charm whate'er the theme,
My Mary!
Thy silver locks, once auburn bright,
Are still more lovely in my sight
Than golden beams of orient light,
My Mary!
For could I view nor them nor thee,
What sight worth seeing could I see!
The sun would rise in vain for me,
My Mary!
Partakers of thy sad decline,
Thy hands their little force resign,
Yet gently prest, press gently mine,
My Mary!
Such feebleness of limbs thou prov'st,
That now, at every step thou mov'st,
Upheld by two, yet still thou lov'st,
My Mary!
And still to love, though prest with ill,
In wintry age to feel no chill,
With me is to be lovely still,
My Mary!
But, ah! by constant heed I know
How oft the sadness that I show
Transforms thy smiles to looks of wo,
My Mary!
And should my future lot be cast
With much resemblance of the past,
Thy worn-out heart will break at last,
My Mary!"

Cowper retained his admirable powers in their full vigor, during the whole of 1793, and till the middle of January, of the following year. His letters, written subsequently to Mr. Hayley's visit, though but few, afford unquestionable proofs, that his talents had not suffered the slightest diminution. The following extract, in reply to some remarks on a disputed passage in his Homer, will show that his faculties were then unimpaired. To Mr. Hayley, 5th January, 1794, he writes:—"If my old friend would look into my preface, he would find a principle laid down there which perhaps it would not be easy to invalidate, and which, properly attended to, would equally secure a translation from stiffness, and from wildness. The principle I mean is this —'Close, but not so close as to be servile! free, but not so free as to be licentious! A superstitious fidelity loses the spirit, and a loose deviation the sense of the translated author—a happy moderation in either case is the only possible way of preserving both.'

"Imlac, in Rasselas, says—I forget to whom, 'You have convinced me that it is impossible to be a poet.' In like manner, I might say to his Lordship, you have convinced me that it is impossible to be a translator—to be one, on his terms at least, is, I am sure, impossible. On his terms, I would defy Homer himself, were he alive, to translate the Paradise Lost into Greek. Yet Milton had Homer much in his eye when he composed that poem. Whereas, Homer never thought of me, or my translation. There are minutiæ in every language, which, translated into another, would spoil the version. Such extreme fidelity is, in fact, unfaithful. Such close resemblance takes away all likeness. The original is elegant, easy, natural; the copy is clumsy, constrained, and unnatural. To what is this owing? To the adoption of terms not congenial to your purpose, and of a context, such as no man writing an original would make use of. Homer is every thing that a poet should be. A translation of him, so made, will be every thing a translation of Homer should not be; because it will be written in no language under heaven. It will be English, and it will be Greek, and therefore it will be neither. He is the man, whoever he may be, (I do not pretend to be that man myself)—he is the man best qualified as a translator of Homer, who has drenched, and steeped, and soaked himself in the effusions of his genius, till he has imbibed their color to the bone, and who, when he is thus dyed, through and through, distinguishing what is essentially Greek, from what may be habited in English, rejects the former, and is faithful to the latter, as far as the purposes of fine poetry will permit, and no farther; this, I think, may be easily proved. Homer is every where remarkable for ease, dignity, energy of expression, grandeur of conception, and a majestic flow of numbers. If we copy him so closely as to make every one of these excellent properties of his absolutely unattainable, which will certainly be the effect of too close a copy, instead of translating him, we murder him. Therefore, after all that his Lordship has said, I still hold freedom to be an indispensable. Freedom, I mean, with respect to the expression; freedom so limited as never to leave behind the *matter*, but at the same time indulged with a sufficient scope, to secure the spirit, and as much as possible of the manner; I say as much as possible, because an English manner must differ from a Greek one, in order to be graceful, and for this there is no remedy. Can an ungraceful, awkward translator of Homer be a good one? No: but a graceful, easy, natural, faithful version of him—will not that be a good one? Yes. Allow me but this, and I insist upon it, that such a one may be produced on my principles, and can be produced on no other. Reading his Lordship's sentiments over again, I am inclined to think that in all I have said, I have only given him back the same in other terms. He disallows both the absolute *free*, and the absolute *close*; so do I, and if I understand myself, have said so in my preface. He wishes to recommend a medium, though he will not call it so; so do I; only we express it differently. What is it then that we dispute about? I confess my head is not good enough to-day to discover."

This was almost the last letter Cowper wrote to Mr. Hayley, and, with a very few exceptions, the last that he ever wrote at all. Shortly after he had forwarded this, he experienced a more severe attack of depression than he had ever before felt, which paralyzed all his powers, and continued almost wholly unmitigated, through the remaining period of his life. The situation to which he was now reduced, was deeply affecting; imagination can scarcely picture to itself a scene of wretchedness more truly deplorable. Mrs. Unwin's infirmi-

ties had reduced her to a state of second childhood; a deep-seated melancholy, which nothing could remove, preyed upon Cowper's mind, and caused him to shun the sight of all except the individual who was utterly incapable of rendering him any assistance; his domestic expenses were daily increasing, and as his capabilities of preventing it were now entirely suspended, there was every probability of his being involved in considerable embarrassment. The providence of God, however, which had watched over, and preserved him during the whole of his life, and had appeared on his behalf in several instances of peculiar distress, in a manner truly striking and affecting, did not abandon him in his present painful emergency. Lady Hesketh, his amiable cousin, and favorite correspondent, now generously undertook the arduous task of watching over the melancholy poet and his feeble associate. The painful duties of this important office, which every one who is at all acquainted with the great anxiety of mind required in all cases of mental aberration, will admit to be in no ordinary degree arduous, she discharged with the utmost Christian tenderness and affection. Nor did she discover any disposition to relinquish her charge, though it made considerable inroads upon her health, owing to the confinement and exertion it required, until an opportunity offered of placing these interesting invalids under the care of those whom she knew would feel the greatest pleasure in laying themselves out for their comfort.

Hearing nothing from Cowper for several days beyond the time when he was accustomed to write, Mr. Hayley began to fear that his apprehensions respecting his friend's health were realized. He did not, however, receive the painful intelligence of his relapse until some time afterwards, when he was informed of it by a letter from Lady Hesketh, detailing the particulars of his distressing case. About this time the Rev. Mr. Greathead, with whom Cowper had long been on terms of intimacy, and whom he very highly esteemed, paid him a visit. Such, however, was the distressing state to which Cowper was now reduced, that he refused to see any one, but his own domestics, on whatever friendly terms he might have been with them formerly. The hopes that his friends had cherished of his recovery, in some degree, at least, as the summer advanced, were now entirely cut off; and they were all fully persuaded that unless some improvement took place in the state of his mind, the worst consequences were to be apprehended. The best advice had been taken without the slightest benefit, and the case began to appear altogether hopeless. It occurred to Lady Hesketh that probably the presence of Mr. Hayley would cheer the poet's mind, and rouse him from his present state of almost absolute despair. She suggested this to Mr. Greathead, but said she could not venture to mention the subject in her letters to Mr. Hayley, as it appeared unreasonable to request a person to come so great a distance with so little real chance of success. Mr. Greathead immediately wrote the following letter to Mr. Hayley, on the subject, which describes the melancholy condition to which Cowper was then reduced, and the great anxiety of mind manifested by his friends on his behalf:—

"Dear Sir, Lady Hesketh's correspondence has acquainted you with the melancholy relapse of our dear friend at Weston; but I am uncertain whether you know that within the last fortnight, he has refused food of every kind, except now and then a very small piece of toasted bread, dipped generally in water, sometimes mixed with a little wine. This, her Ladyship informs me, was the case till last Saturday; since then he has eaten a little at each family meal. He persists in refusing to take such medicines as are indispensable to his state of body. In such circumstances his long continuance in life cannot be expected. How devoutly to be wished is the alleviation of his sufferings and distress! You, dear sir, who know so well the worth of our beloved and admired friend, sympathize with us in this affliction, and deprecate his loss doubtless in no ordinary degree. You have already most effectually expressed and proved the warmth of your friendship. I cannot think that any thing but your society would have been sufficient, during the infirmity under which his mind has long been oppressed, to have supported him against the shock of Mrs. Unwin's paralytic attack. I am certain that nothing else could have prevailed upon him to undertake the journey to Eartham. You have succeeded where his other friends knew they could not, and where they apprehended no one could. How natural, therefore, is it, for them to look to you, as most likely to be instrumental, under the blessing of God, to bring him relief in the present distressing and alarming crisis! It is, indeed, not a little unreasonable to ask any person to take such a journey, to witness so melancholy a scene, with an uncertainty of the desired success, increased as the present difficulty is, by dear Mr. Cowper's aversion to all company. On these accounts, Lady Hesketh does not ask it of you, rejoiced as she would be at your arrival. Am not I, dear sir, a very presumptuous person, who, in the face of all opposition, dare do this? I am emboldened by these two powerful supporters —conscience, and experience. Were I at Eartham, I would certainly undertake the journey I have presumed to recommend, for the bare possibility of restoring Mr. Cowper to himself, to his friends, and to the public."

Mr. Hayley was too affectionately attached to Cowper, to hesitate for a moment, what steps he should take on the receipt of this letter. The remotest probability of his being useful to his afflicted friend, was amply sufficient to have induced him to undertake a much longer journey than this, to whatever dangers and inconveniences it might have exposed him. He accordingly made immediate arrangements for a visit to Weston, where he arrived a few days afterwards, with his talented son, a youth of great promise, to whom Cowper was most affectionately attached. Little or no benefit, however, resulted from this visit. The suffering invalid was too deeply overwhelmed by his depressive malady to show even the slightest symptoms of satisfaction at the appearance of one whom he had ever been accustomed to welcome with such affectionate delight. His acute anguish had nearly extinguished all the finest faculties of his mind, and annihilated, at least for a time, all the best affections of his heart. He seemed to shrink from every human creature, and if he allowed any one, except his own domestics, to approach him, it was with so much obvious reluctance and aversion, that no benefit could be expected to arise from the interview. The only exception was in the case of Mr. Hayley's son, in whose company he would occasionally, for a short time, seem pleased; which Mr. Hayley "attributed partly to the peculiar charm which is generally found in the manners of tender ingenuous children; and partly to that uncommon sweetness of character which had inspired Cowper with a degree of parental partiality towards this highly promising youth." The united efforts, however, of both father and son, could not produce the slightest alleviation of Cowper's sufferings.

Shortly after Mr. Hayley's arrival at Weston, Lady Hesketh embraced the opportunity of leaving her interesting invalids for a few days in his charge, that she might, by a personal interview, consult the eminent Dr. Willis, who had prescribed so successfully in the case of his Majesty George the Third,

on the subject of Cowper's malady. Lord Thurlow had written to the doctor in Cowper's behalf, and at his and Lady Hesketh's request, he was induced to visit the interesting sufferer at Weston. Here again, however, the expectations of his friends were greatly disappointed; as the doctor's skill on this occasion proved wholly unsuccessful.

Mr. Hayley remained at Weston for some weeks, exerting all the means that ingenuity could invent, or that affection could dictate, to afford some relief to his suffering friend; he had, however, the mortification to perceive that his well-directed efforts were entirely useless. The circumstances in which Cowper was now placed, were exceedingly unfavorable to mental relief. Associated with one whose daily increasing infirmities were rapidly reducing her to a state of the most affecting imbecility; the constant sight of which was of itself almost sufficient to have produced melancholy in a tender mind like Cowper's, it was hardly probable that, under such circumstances, he should recover from his most depressive malady. And yet to have separated him from the being with whom he had been so long associated, would have been an act of cruelty, which he would not, in all probability, have survived. All that could be done was to mitigate, as much as possible, the sufferings of each individual, and to persevere in the use of such means, as would be most likely, under such circumstances, to promote the poet's recovery, leaving the event at His disposal who, in a manner altogether unexpected, had formerly appeared for him on several distressing occasions.

One morning in April, 1794, while Mr. Hayley was at Weston, musing, as he and Lady Hesketh were sometimes accustomed to do, over the melancholy scene of Cowper's sufferings, with aching and almost broken hearts, at the utter inefficacy of every measure that had been taken to afford him relief, they were suddenly almost overjoyed at the receipt of a letter from Lord Spencer, announcing it to be his Majesty's gracious intention to allow Cowper the grant of such a pension for life as would secure to him an honorable competence. The only subject of regret, at this pleasing circumstance, was that he whom it was chiefly intended to benefit, and who, if he had been free from his depressive malady, would have been gratified in the highest degree at this instance of royal generosity, was in a condition that rendered it impossible for him to receive, even the faintest glimmering of joy on the occasion. It was, however, fondly hoped by his friends, that he would ultimately recover, and that the day would at length arrive, when he would be able gratefully to acknowledge this princely beneficence. Well was it, indeed, for his friends, that they supported their minds by indulging these hopes of amendment. Had they known that he was doomed to pass six years in the same depressed and melancholy condition, with scarcely a single alleviation, and was, at the expiration of that lengthened period, to leave the world under the influence of this midnight gloom, they would themselves have almost become the subjects of despair. Such, however, was the case; and it is doubtful, though Cowper subsequently recovered in some slight degree from his depression, whether he was ever in a condition fully to appreciate the value of his Majesty's grant.

Mr. Hayley's departure from Weston, which was now become to him as much a scene of suffering, as it had formerly been of enjoyment, he thus affectingly records:—"After devoting a few weeks at Weston, I was under the painful necessity of forcing myself away from my unhappy friend, who, though he appeared to take no pleasure in my society, expressed extreme reluctance to let me depart. I hardly ever endured an hour more dreadfully distressing than the hour in which I left him. Yet the anguish of it would have been greatly increased, had I been conscious that he was destined to years of this dark depression, and that I should see him no more. I still indulged the hope, from the native vigor of his frame, that as he had formerly struggled through longer fits of the depressive malady, his darkened mind would yet emerge from this calamitous eclipse, and shine forth again with new lustre. These hopes were considerably increased at a subsequent period: but, alas! they were delusive! for though he recovered sufficient command of his faculties to write a few occasional poems, and to retouch his 'Homer,' yet the prospect of his perfect recovery was never realized; and I had beheld the poet of unrivalled genius, the sympathetic friend, and the delightful companion, for the last time!"

Cowper remained in the same most distressing state, from the time of Mr. Hayley's departure, which was in the spring of 1794, till the summer of 1795. During the whole of this time, he was most affectionately watched over by his amiable cousin; she procured for him the best medical advice, and employed every means that promised the slightest chance of proving beneficial. All these, however, were ineffectual to lighten that ponderous burden which incessantly pressed upon and weighed down his spirits. He had now been eighteen months in this deplorable state, and, instead of becoming better, if any alteration had taken place at all, it was evidently for the worse. Lady Hesketh's health was beginning to fail, owing to the intense anxiety of mind she had experienced for so long a period; and it became at length desirable to try what effect a change of air and of scene would have upon him. Almost all his friends recommended this measure, which was no sooner determined upon, than his highly esteemed relative of Norfolk, the Reverend J. Johnson, who had been several weeks at Weston, assisting Lady Hesketh, voluntarily and generously undertook the charge of both these suffering but interesting individuals. Their removal from Weston to North Tuddenham, in Norfolk, took place under the immediate guidance of Mr. Johnson, on the 28th of July, 1795. They performed their journey in safety and ease in three days. Here they were accommodated with a commodious parsonage-house, by the kindness of the Rev. Leonard Shelford, with whom Mr. Johnson had previously made arrangements for their reception, fearing lest the activity and bustle that occasionally prevailed in the vicinity of his own house, situated in the market-place at East-Dereham, should harass and perplex the tender mind of Cowper.

They continued in their new residence only a very short time. In the following August Mr. Johnson conducted them to Mundesley, a village on the Norfolk coast, hoping that a situation by the sea-side might prove amusing to Cowper, and become ultimately the means of reviving his spirits. Here they remained till the following October, without appearing to derive any benefit whatever. While in this situation Cowper, who had long discontinued all correspondence with his friends, ventured to write the following letter to the Reverend Mr. Buchanan, which, while it shows the melancholy depression under which he still labored, proves that he was not without some occasional intermissions of pleasure:—"I will forget for a moment that, to whomsoever I may address myself, a letter from me can no otherwise be welcome than as a curiosity. To you, Sir, I address this, urged to it by extreme penury of employment, and the desire I feel to learn something of what is doing, and has been done, at Weston (my beloved Weston,) since I left it.

"The coldness of these blasts, even in the hottest days, has been such, that, added to the irritation of the salt spray, with which they are always charged, they have occasioned me an inflammation of the eyelids, which threatened, a few days since, to confine me entirely; but by absenting myself as much as possible from the beach, and guarding my face with an umbrella, that inconvenience is in some degree abated. My chamber commands a very near view of the ocean, and the ships, at high water, approach the coast so closely, that a man, furnished with better eyes than mine, might, I doubt not, discern the sailors from the window. No situation, at least when the weather is clear, can be more pleasant; which you will easily credit, when I add, that it imparts something a little resembling pleasure, even to me. Gratify me with news of Weston! If Mr. Gregor, and your neighbors the Courtenays, are there, mention me to them in such terms as you see good. Tell me, if my poor birds are living? I never see the herbs I used to give them, without a recollection of them, and sometimes am ready to gather them, forgetting that I am not at home."

In the beginning of October, 1795, Mr. Johnson took the two interesting invalids to his own residence at Dereham, where they remained about a month, when they removed to Dunham Lodge, which was then unoccupied, and was pleasantly situated in a park, a few miles from Swaffham, and which from that time became their settled residence. Here they were constantly attended by two of the most interesting females that could possibly have been selected, Miss Johnson and Miss Perowne. The latter took so lively an interest in Cowper's welfare, and exerted so much ingenuity, in attempting to produce some alleviation of his sufferings, that he ever afterwards honored her with his peculiar regard, and preferred her attendance to that of every other individual by whom he was surrounded; and she continued her kind attention to him to the close of his life. The providence of God (as Mr. Hayley justly remarks) was strikingly displayed towards Cowper, in supplying him with attendants, during the whole of his life, peculiarly suited to the exigencies of mental dejection.

Cowper's melancholy depression still remained unalleviated. In June, 1795, however, an incident occurred, which for a time, though it removed not his dejection, revived the spirits of his friends, and cheered them with the hope of his ultimate recovery. Mr. Johnson invariably procured copies of all such new publications as were likely to interest the mind of Cowper; and as Cowper had discontinued the use of his pen, and manifested considerable disinclination to read himself, Mr. Johnson kindly undertook to read these publications to his relative whenever suitable opportunities offered. About this time, Mr. Wakefield published his edition of Pope's Homer. It occurred to Mr. Johnson, who always readily embraced the slightest incident that seemed likely to diminish the anguish of his afflicted relative, that this work might probably excite the poet's attention sufficiently to rouse him, in some degree, from his dejection. He immediately, therefore, procured a copy, and ingeniously placed it in a conspicuous part of a large unfrequented room, through which he knew Cowper would have to pass, in his way from Mrs. Unwin's apartments, and in which, he was aware, it was Cowper's practice, daily, to take some turns, observing previously to his afflicted relative, that the work contained some occasional comparison of Pope with Cowper. The plan succeeded far beyond Mr. Johnson's expectation: to his agreeable surprise, he discovered, the next day, that Cowper had not only found the passages to which he had adverted, but had corrected his translation at the suggestion of some of them. Perceiving that the poet's attention was arrested, it was vigilantly cherished by the utmost efforts of Mr. Johnson; and from that time Cowper regularly engaged in a revisal of his own version, and for some weeks produced almost sixty new lines a-day. He continued this occupation so steadily, and with so much deliberation, that all his friends began to rejoice at the prospect of his almost immediate recovery. Their hopes, however, were of short duration. In a few weeks he again relapsed into the same state of hopeless depression. In the ensuing autumn, Mr. Johnson again made trial of a change of air and scene, and removed the family to the delightful village of Mundesley. No apparent benefit, however, resulted from this change, and towards the close of October, 1796, it was thought desirable to remove the family to Mr. Johnson's house at Dereham, and to remain there during the winter, as the Lodge was at too great a distance from Mr. Johnson's churches.

In the following December, it became evident that Mrs. Unwin's life was rapidly drawing to a close; she had been gradually sinking for a considerable time; and on the seventeenth day of this month, in the 72d year of her age, she peacefully, and without a groan, or a sigh, resigned her happy spirit into the hands of God. Her life had been eminently distinguished by the most fervent and unaffected piety, which she had displayed in circumstances the most trying and afflicting, and her end was peace. The day before she expired, Cowper, as he had long been accustomed to do at regular periods, spent a short time with his afflicted and long-tried friend; and though to his inmates he appeared so absorbed in his own mental anguish, as to take little, if any, notice of her condition, it was evident afterwards that he clearly perceived how fast she was sinking; for, as a faithful servant of himself and his afflicted friend, was opening the window of his chamber the following morning, he addressed her in a tone the most plaintive and affecting, "Sally, is there life above stairs?" a convincing proof that the acuteness of his own anguish had not prevented him from bestowing great attention to the sufferings of his aged friend. He saw her, for the last time, about an hour before she expired; and, notwithstanding the intensity of his own distress, he was much affected, though he clearly perceived that she enjoyed the utmost tranquillity. He saw the corpse once after her decease; and after looking at it attentively for a short time, he suddenly withdrew, under the influence of the strongest emotions. She was buried in Dereham church, on the 23d December, 1796, and a marble tablet was raised to her memory, with the following inscription:

"IN MEMORY OF
MARY,
WIDOW OF THE REV. MORLEY UNWIN,
AND
MOTHER OF THE REV. WILLIAM CAWTHORN UNWIN,
BORN AT ELY, 1724.
BURIED IN THIS CHURCH, 1796.

Trusting in God with all her heart and mind,
This woman proved magnanimously kind,
Endured affliction's desolating hail,
And watched a poet through misfortune's vale,
Her spotless dust, angelic guards defend!
It is the dust of Unwin, Cowper's friend!
That single title in itself is fame,
For all who read his verse revere her name."

Had Cowper been in the enjoyment of health, and had his mind been entirely free from his gloomy forebodings at the time of Mrs. Unwin's decease, so tender and lively were his feelings, that it

would undoubtedly have proved to him one of the severest shocks he had ever experienced. Such, however, was the influence of his melancholy depression, that he never afterwards adverted to the event, even in the most distant way, nor did he even make the slightest inquiries respecting her funeral. A more striking proof of the intense anguish of his own sufferings cannot possibly be given. Dreadful, indeed, must have been those feelings that could have produced an insensibility so great in his tender mind, for the loss of such a friend!

In the summer of 1797, Cowper's health appeared in some measure to improve, and in the following September, at the earnest entreaty of his kinsman, he again resumed the revisal of his Homer; and, notwithstanding the severity of his mental anguish, he persevered in it, with some occasional interruption, till the eighth of May, 1799, on which day he completed the work. It was evidently owing to the rare talents exerted by Mr. Johnson on the mind of Cowper, that he was induced to bring this great work to a successful close. And it would have been exceedingly difficult, if not utterly impossible, to have found an individual who could, with so much tenderness, have exerted an influence so beneficial over the distressed mind of the poet. He was, however, indefatigable in his efforts to divert his mind from the melancholy depression which spread its pernicious influence over his soul. And, during the whole of the summer of 1798, he endeavored, by frequent change of scene, sometimes residing for a week or two at Mundesley, and then returning to Dereham, to restore the mind of his revered relative to its proper tone. And though he had not the satisfaction to see his efforts crowned with complete success, yet he was pleased to perceive them prove in some degree, at least, beneficial to the interesting sufferer. In his sketch of Cowper's life, published in the last edition of the poet's works, he "records it as a subject of much gratitude, that a merciful providence should again have appointed his afflicted relative to the employment alluded to, as, more than any thing else, it diverted his mind from a contemplation of its miseries, and seemed to extend his breathing, which was at other times short, to a depth of respiration more compatible with ease."

The happy means pursued by Mr. Johnson to induce Cowper to complete the revisal of his Homer, and its successful result, ought not to go unrecorded. He thus relates it in the excellent sketch above referred to:—"His kinsman resolved, if it were possible, to reinstate him in the revisal of his Homer. One morning, therefore, after breakfast, in the month of September, 1797, he placed the commentaries on the table one by one, namely, Villoison, Barnes, and Clarke, opening them all, together with the poet's translation, at the place where he had left off a twelvemonth before; but, talking with him as he paced the room, upon a very different subject, namely, the impossibility of the things befalling him, which his imagination had represented; when, as his companion had wished, Cowper said to him, 'And are you sure that I shall be here till the book you are reading is finished.' Quite sure, replied his kinsman, and that you will also be here to complete the revisal of your Homer, pointing to the books, if you will resume it to-day. As he repeated these words, he left the room, rejoicing in the well-known token of their having sunk deep into the poet's mind, namely, his seating himself on the sofa, taking up one of the books, and saying, in a low and plaintive voice, 'I may as well do this, for I can do nothing else.'"

In July, 1798, the Dowager Lady Spencer paid the afflicted poet a visit. Had he been in the enjoyment of health, he would undoubtedly have received her with the greatest respect and affection, and the conversation between them would have been equally pleasing to both parties; such, however, was his melancholy depression, that he seemed not to derive any pleasure from the visit, and on no occasion could he be prevailed upon to converse with his distinguished visitor with any apparent pleasure.

While residing at Mundesley, in October, 1798, Cowper felt himself so far relieved from his depressive malady as to undertake, without solicitation, to write to Lady Hesketh. The following extract from this letter, will show the severity of his mental anguish, even at that period:—"You describe delightful scenes, but you describe them to one, who, if he even saw them, could receive no delight from them, who has a faint recollection, and so faint as to be like an almost forgotten dream, that once he was susceptible of pleasure from such causes. The country that you have had in prospect, has been always famed for its beauties; but the wretch who can derive no gratification from a view of nature, even under the disadvantage of her most ordinary dress, will have no eyes to admire her in any. In one day—in one minute, I should rather have said—she became an universal blank to me, and though from a different cause, yet with an effect as difficult to remove as blindness itself."

Mr. Johnson again removed from Mundesley to Dereham, towards the end of October, and pursuing their journey, on this occasion, with himself, Miss Perowne, and Cowper, in the post-chaise, they were overturned. Cowper discovered no particular alarm on the occasion, and through the blessing of Providence, they all escaped unhurt.

As soon as Cowper had finished the revisal of his Homer, Mr. Johnson laid before him the papers containing the commencement of his projected poem—*The Four Ages*. He, however, declined undertaking it, as a work far too important for him to attempt in his present situation. Several other literary projects, of easier accomplishment, were then suggested to him by his kinsman, who was aware of the great benefit he had derived from employment, and was seriously apprehensive that the want of it would add to his depression: all of them, however, were objected to by the poet, who at length replied, that he had just thought of six Latin verses, and if he could do any thing, it must be in pursuing something of that description. He, however, gratified his friends by occasionally employing the powers of his astonishing mind, which still remained in full vigor, in the composition of some short original poems. In this way he produced the poem entitled Montes Glaciales, founded upon an incident, which he had heard read from a Norwich paper, several months previous; to which, at the time, owing to his depression, he appeared to pay no attention. This poem he afterwards, at the request of Miss Perowne, translated into Latin. Translation was his principal amusement; sometimes from Latin and Greek into English, and occasionally from English into Latin. In this way he translated several of Gay's Fables, and communicated to them, in their new dress, all that ease and vivacity which they have in the original. Thus elegantly employed, he continued, with some intermissions, almost to the close of his life.

The last original poem he composed was entitled *The Cast-away*, and was founded upon an incident, related in Anson's Voyage, of a mariner who was washed overboard in the Atlantic, and lost, which he remembered to have read in that work many years ago, and which, according to the following stanzas, selected from it, he appears to have regarded as an illustration of his own case:—

"Obscurest night involved the sky,
The Atlantic billows roared,
When such a destined wretch as I,
Washed headlong from on board,
Of friends, of hope, of all bereft,
His floating home for ever left.

He long survives who lives an hour
In ocean self-upheld,
And so long he, with unspent power,
His destiny repelled;
And ever, as the minutes flew,
Entreated help, or cry'd 'Adieu!'

No poet wept him, but the page
Of narrative sincere,
That tells his name, his worth, his age,
Is wet with Anson's tear:
And tears, by bards or heroes shed,
Alike immortalize the dead.

I therefore purpose not, or dream,
Descanting on his fate!
To give the melancholy theme
A more enduring date.
But misery still delights to trace
Its semblance in another's case.

No voice divine the storm allay'd,
No light propitious shone,
When snatched from all effectual aid,
We perished, each alone;
But I beneath a rougher sea,
And whelmed in deeper gulfs than he!"

Anxious as all his friends now were, that he should be constantly employed, as this proved the best remedy for his depression, they were frequently pained to see him reduced to a state of hopeless inactivity, owing to the severity of his mental anguish. At these seasons, what suited him best was Mr. Johnson's reading to him, which he was accustomed to do, almost invariably for a length of time, every day. And so industriously had he persevered in this method of relieving the poet's mind, that after having exhausted numerous works of fiction which had the power of attracting his attention, he began to read to his afflicted relative the poet's own works. Cowper evinced no disapprobation to this till the reader arrived at the history of John Gilpin, when he entreated his relative to desist.

It became evident towards the close of 1799, that his bodily strength was rapidly declining, though his mental powers, notwithstanding the unmitigated severity of his depression, remained unimpaired. In January, 1800, Mr. Johnson observed in him many symptoms which he thought very unfavorable. This induced him to call in additional medical advice. His complaint was pronounced to be, not as has been generally stated, dropsical, but a breaking up of the constitution. Remedies however were tried, and he was recommended to take as much gentle exercise as he could bear. To this recommendation he discovered no particular aversion, and Mr. Johnson took him for a ride in a post-chaise as often as circumstances would permit; it was, however, with considerable difficulty he could be prevailed upon to use such medicines as it was thought necessary to employ.

About this time his friend Mr. Hayley wrote to him, expressing a wish that he would new-model a passage in his translation of the Iliad, where mention is made of the very ancient sculpture in which Dædalus had represented the Cretan dance for Ariadne. "On the 31st January," says Mr. Hayley, "I received from him his improved version of the lines in question, written in a firm and delicate hand. The sight of such writing from my long silent friend, inspired me with a lively, but too sanguine hope, that I might see him once more restored. Alas! the verses which I surveyed as a delightful omen of future letters from a correspondent so inexpressibly dear to me, proved the last effort of his pen."

Cowper's weakness now very rapidly increased, and by the end of February it had become so great as to render him incapable of enduring the fatigue of his usual ride, which was hence discontinued. In a few days he ceased to come down stairs, though he was still able, after breakfasting in bed, to adjourn to another room, and to remain there till the evening. By the end of the ensuing March, he was compelled to forego even this trifling exercise. He was now entirely confined to his bed-room; he was, however, still able to sit up to every meal except breakfast.

His friend, Mr. Rose, about this time, paid him a visit. Such, however, was the melancholy change which his complicated maladies had produced upon his mind, that he expressed no pleasure at the arrival of one whom he had previously been accustomed to greet with the most cordial reception. Mr. Rose remained with him till the first week in April, witnessing with much sorrow the sufferings of the afflicted poet, and kindly sympathizing with his distressed relations and friends. Little as Cowper had appeared to enjoy his company, he evinced symptoms of considerable regret at his departure.

Both Lady Hesketh and Mr. Hayley would have followed the humane example of Mr. Rose, in visiting the dying poet, had they not been prevented by circumstances over which they had no control. The health of the former had suffered considerably by her long confinement with Cowper, at the commencement of his last attack, and the latter was detained by the impending death of a darling child.

Mr. Johnson informs us, in his sketch of the poet's life, that, "on the 19th April the weakness of this truly pitiable sufferer had so much increased that his kinsman apprehended his death to be near. Adverting, therefore, to the affliction, as well of body as of mind, which his beloved inmate was then enduring, he ventured to speak of his approaching dissolution as the signal of his deliverance from both these miseries. After a pause of a few moments, which was less interrupted by the objections of his desponding relative than he had dared to hope, he proceeded to an observation more consolatory still—namely, that in the world to which he was hastening, a merciful Redeemer, who had prepared unspeakable happiness for all his children, and therefore for *him* ——. To the first part of this sentence he had listened with composure, but the concluding words were no sooner uttered than his passionately expressed entreaties that his companion would desist from any further observations of a similar kind, clearly proved that though he was on the eve of being invested with angelic light, the darkness of delusion still veiled his spirit."

On the following day, which was Sunday, he revived a little. Mr. Johnson, on repairing to his room, after he had discharged his clerical duties, found him in bed and asleep. He did not, however, leave the room, but remained watching him, expecting he might, on awaking, require his assistance. Whilst engaged in this melancholy office, and endeavoring to reconcile his mind to the loss of so dear a friend, by considering the gain which that friend would experience, his reflections were suddenly interrupted by the singularly varied tone in which Cowper then began to breathe. Imagining it to be the sound of his immediate summons, after listening to it for several minutes, he arose from the foot of the bed on which he was sitting, to take a nearer, and, as he supposed, a last view of

his departing relative, commending his soul to that gracious Saviour, whom, in the fulness of mental health, he had delighted to honor. As he put aside the curtains, Cowper opened his eyes, but closed them again without speaking, and breathed as usual. On Monday he was much worse; though, towards the close of the day, he revived sufficiently to take a little refreshment. The two following days he evidently continued to sink rapidly. He revived a little on Thursday, but, in the course of the night, he appeared exceedingly exhausted: some refreshment was presented to him by Miss Perowne, but, owing to a persuasion that nothing could afford him relief, though without any apparent impression that the hand of death was already upon him, he mildly rejected the cordial with these words, the last he was heard to utter—"*What can it signify?*"

Early on Friday morning, the 25th, a decided alteration for the worse was perceived to have taken place. A deadly change appeared in his countenance. In this insensible state he remained till a few minutes before five in the afternoon, when he gently, and without the slightest apparent pain, ceased to breathe, and his happy spirit escaped from his body, in which, amidst the thickest gloom of darkness, it had so long been imprisoned, and took its flight to the regions of perfect purity and bliss. In a manner so mild and gentle did death make its approach, that though his kinsman, his medical attendant, and three others, were standing at the foot of the bed, with their eyes fixed upon his dying countenance, the precise moment of his departure was unobserved by any.

"From this mournful period," writes Mr. Johnson, "till the features of his deceased friend were closed from his view, the expression which the kinsman of Cowper observed in them, and which he was affectionately delighted to suppose an index of the last thoughts and enjoyments of his soul in its gradual escape from the depths of despondence, was that of calmness and composure, mingled, as it were, with holy surprise."

He was buried in that part of Dereham church, called St. Edmund's Chapel, on Saturday, the 2d May, 1800; and his funeral was attended by several of his relatives. In a literary point of view, his long and painful affliction had ever been regarded as a national calamity; a deep and almost universal sympathy was felt in his behalf; and by all men of learning and of piety, his death was looked upon as an event of no common importance.

As he died without a will, his amiable and beloved relation, Lady Hesketh, kindly undertook to become his administratrix. She raised a tablet monument to his memory, with the following inscription:—

IN MEMORY OF
WILLIAM COWPER, Esq.,
BORN IN HERTFORDSHIRE,
1731.
BURIED IN THIS CHURCH,
1800.

Ye who with warmth the public triumph feel
Of talents, dignified by sacred zeal,
Here, to devotion's bard, devoutly just,
Pay your fond tribute, due to Cowper's dust!
England, exulting in his spotless fame,
Ranks with her dearest sons his favorite name!
Sense, fancy, wit, suffice not all to raise
So clear a title to affection's praise:
His highest honors to the heart belong—
His virtues formed the magic of his song.

The following lines have been kindly handed to the author by a friend, in manuscript. He is not sure they have never been in print, though he rather inclines to think such is the case.

And is the spirit of the Poet fled?
Yes, from its earthly tenement 'tis flown;
And death at length hath added to the dead
The sweetest minstrel that the world has known

Too nice, too great, his sympathy of soul;
For, oh! his feelings were so much refined,
That sense became impatient of control,
And darkness seized the empire of his mind.

But when Reflection threw her eagle eye
Athwart the gloom of unpropitious fate,
Faith op'd a splendid vista to the sky,
And gave an earnest of a happier state:

To see, whilst sceptics to the effects of chance
Ascribe creation's ever-varying form;
To see distinctly, at the first slight glance,
Who wings the lightning, and who drives the storm

To brush the cobweb follies from the great,
Which Art, with all her sophistry, has spread;
Uphold the honor of a sinking state,
And bid Religion raise her drooping head.

Such were the objects of the enraptured bard,
In such his lucid intervals he passed;
And knowing Virtue was her own reward,
Wooed, and revered, and loved her to the last.

Know, then, that Death has added to his list
As sweet a bard as ever swept a lyre;
In Death's despite his memory shall exist
In numbers pregnant with celestial fire.

Yes, Cowper! with thy own expressive lays,
Lays which have haply many a mind illum'd,
Thy name shall triumph o'er the lapse of days,
And only perish when the world 's consumed!

CHAPTER XVIII.

Description of his person, his manners, his disposition, his piety. His attachment to the Established Church. His attainments. Originality of his poetry. His religious sentiments. The warmth of his friendship. His attachment to the British constitution. His industry and perseverance. Happy manner in which he could console the afflicted. His occasional intervals of enjoyment. Character as a writer. Powers of description. Beauty of his letters. His aversion to flattery, to affectation, to cruelty. His love of liberty, and dread of its abuse. Strong attachment to, and intimate acquaintance with the Scriptures. Pleasure with which he sometimes viewed the works of creation. Contentment of his mind. Extract from an anonymous critic. Poetic tribute to his memory.

It is scarcely necessary to add any thing on the subject of Cowper's character, after the ample delineation that has already been given of it in this memoir: we shall, however, subjoin the following brief remarks, which could not so conveniently be introduced in any other part of the narrative.

Cowper was of the middle stature; he had a fine, open, and expressive countenance; that indicated much thoughtfulness, and almost excessive sensibility. His eyes were more remarkable for the expression of tenderness than of penetration. The general expression of his countenance partook of that sedate cheerfulness, which so strikingly characterizes all his original productions, and which never failed to impart a peculiar charm to his conversation. His limbs were more remarkable for strength than for delicacy of form. He possessed a warm temperament; and he says of himself, in a letter to his cousin Mrs. Bodham, dated February 27, 1790, that he was naturally "somewhat irritable," but, if he was, his religious principles had so subdued that tendency, that a near relation, who was intimately acquainted with him the last ten years of his life, never saw his temper ruffled in a single instance.

His manners were generally somewhat shy and reserved, particularly to strangers: when, however, he was in perfect health, and in such society as was quite congenial to his taste, they were perfectly free and unembarrassed; his conversation was unrestrained and

cheerful, and his whole deportment was the most polite and graceful, especially to females, towards whom he conducted himself, on all occasions, with the strictest delicacy and propriety.

Much as Cowper was admired by those who knew him only as a writer, or as an occasional correspondent, he was infinitely more esteemed by his more intimate friends; indeed, the more intimately he was known, the more he was beloved and revered. Nor was this affectionate attachment so much the result of his brilliant talents, as it was of the real goodness of his disposition, and gentleness of his conduct.

Cowper was emphatically, in the strictest and most scriptural sense of the term, *a good man*. His goodness, however, was not the result of mere effort, unconnected with Christian principles, nor did it arise from the absence of those evil dispositions of which all have reason, more or less, to complain; on the contrary, all his writings prove that he felt and deplored the existence of evil affections, and was only able to suppress them by a cordial reception of the gospel of Christ, and the diligent use of those means enforced under that pure and self-denying dispensation. Nor was the goodness of Cowper a mere negative goodness, inducing him only to avoid doing evil; it is evident, from many passages, both from his poetic and prose productions, that he ever looked upon his talents, not as his own, but as belonging to Him from whom he had received them. Under the influence of this impression, all his best and most important original productions were unquestionably written. Desirous of communicating to his fellow-men the same invaluable benefits which he had himself received from the simple yet sublime truths of Christianity, and incapable of attempting it in any other way than that of becoming an author, he took up his pen and produced those unrivalled poems, which, while they delight the mere literary reader for their elegance, beauty, and sublimity, are no less interesting to the Christian for the accurate and striking delineations of real religion, with which they abound. As long as the English language exists, they will most eagerly be sought after, both by the scholar and by the Christian.

Cowper was warmly attached to the religion of the established church, in which he had been trained up, and which, like his friend Mr. Newton, he calmly and deliberately preferred to any other. His attachment, however, was not that of the narrow-minded bigot which blinds the mind to the excellencies of every other religious community; on the contrary, it was the attachment of the firm and steady friend of religious liberty, in the most liberal sense of the term. Of a sectarian spirit he was ever the open and avowed opponent. He sincerely and very highly respected the conscientious of all parties. In one of his letters to Mr. Newton, adverting to a passage in his writings that was likely to expose him to the charge of illiberality, he thus writes. "When I wrote the passage in question, I was not at all aware of any impropriety in it. I am however, glad you have condemned it; and though I do not feel as if I could presently supply its place, shall be willing to attempt the task, whatever labor it may cost me; and rejoice that it will not be in the power of the critics, whatever else they may charge me with, to accuse me of bigotry, or a design to make a certain denomination odious at the hazard of the public peace. I had rather my book should be burnt, than a single line guilty of such tendency should escape me."

Cowper's attainments as a scholar were highly respectable; he was master of four languages, besides his own: Greek, Latin, Italian, and French; and though his reading was by no means so extensive as that of some, it was turned to better account, as he was a most thoughtful and attentive reader, and it was undoubtedly amply sufficient for every purpose, with a genius so brilliant, and a mind so original as his.

The productions of Cowper were eminently and entirely his own; he had neither borrowed from, nor imitated any one. He copied from none, either as to his subjects, or the manner of treating them. All was the creation of his own inventive genius. Adverting to this circumstance, in one of his letters, he thus writes:—"I reckon it among my principal advantages as a composer of verses, that I have not read an English poet these thirteen years, and but one these twenty years. Imitation even of the best models is my aversion; it is a servile and mechanical trick, that has enabled many to usurp the name of author, who could not have written at all, if they had not written upon the pattern of some original. But when the ear and the taste have been much accustomed to the style and manner of others, it is almost impossible to avoid it, and we imitate, in spite of ourselves, just in the same proportion as we admire." Cowper's mode of expressing his thoughts is entirely original: his blank verse is not the blank verse of Milton, or of any other poet. His numbers, his pauses, his diction, are all of his own growth, without transcription, and without imitation. If he thinks in a peculiar train, it is always as a man of genius, and what is better still, as a man of ardent and unaffected piety. His predecessors had circumscribed themselves, both in the choice and management of their subjects, by the observance of a limited number of models, who were thought to have exhausted all the legitimate resources of the art. "But Cowper," says a great modern critic, "at once ventured to cross this enchanted circle, and thus regained the natural liberty of invention, and walked abroad in the open field of observation as freely as those by whom it was originally trodden. He passed from the imitation of poets to the imitation of nature, and ventured boldly upon the representation of objects that none before him had imagined could be employed in poetic imagery. In the ordinary occupations, occurrences, and duties of domestic life, he found a multitude of subjects for ridicule and reflection, for pathetic and picturesque description, for moral declamation and devotional rapture, that would have been looked upon with disdain or despair by all his predecessors. He took as wide a range in language too, as in matter; and shaking off the tawdry encumbrance of that poetical diction which had nearly reduced poetry to a skilful collection of a set of appropriated phrases, he made no scruple to set down in verse every expression that would have been admitted in prose; and to take advantage of all the varieties and changes of which our language is susceptible."

It has been justly remarked, "that between the poetry of Cowper and that of Dryden and Pope, and some of their successors, there is an immense difference. It would be easy to show how little he owed to his immediate forerunners, and how much his immediate followers have been indebted to him. All the cant phrases, all the technicalities of the former school, he utterly threw away; and by his rejection of them, they became obsolete. He boldly adopted cadences of verse unattempted before, which, though frequently uncouth, and sometimes scarcely reducible to rhyme, were not seldom ingeniously significant, and signally energetic. He feared not to employ colloquial, philosophical, judicial idioms, and forms of argument and illustration, which enlarged the vocabulary of poetical terms, less by recurring to obsolete ones, than by hazardous, and generally happy innovations of his own invention, which have since become dignified by usage; but which Pope and his imitators durst not have touched. The eminent adventurous revivers of English poetry, about thirty years ago, Southey, Wordsworth, and Coleridge, in their blank verse, trod directly in the steps of Cowper; and, in their early productions at least, were each in a measure what he had made them. Cowper may be legitimately styled the father of this triumvirate, who are, in truth, the living fathers of an innumerable company of modern poets, whom no ingenuity can well classify and arrange."

The poetry of Cowper is in the highest degree deserving the honorable appellation of *Christian poetry*. He consecrated his muse to the service of that pure and self-denying religion, taught by Christ and his apostles. In this respect his poems differed from the productions of any writers that had then appeared, with the exception of Milton and Young. Both these individuals, though they wrote on religious subjects, yet in all probability wrote principally for fame: with Cowper, however, the desire of doing good predominated over every other feeling; and the hope of emolument, nay, even the love of fame itself, was looked upon as subordinate to this great object, the last to which poets generally pay any consideration. To Young, Cowper was evidently superior, in every thing that constitutes real poetic excellence: and equal to Milton in the ease and elegance of his compositions, and in the vivacity and beauty of his imagery, though seldom, and perhaps never, rising to that majestic sublimity to which the author of Paradise Lost sometimes soared, and in which he stands unrivalled among modern, if not among ancient poets. Milton's matchless poem is a most sublime description of the great facts of the Christian system; every line of it fills the reader with surprise. Hurried on through a profusion of imagery splendid and grand, and never inelegant, tawdry, or ungraceful, the mind be-

comes astonished, and is much more powerfully affected than the heart. We look in vain for those touching appeals to the affections with which Cowper's poetry abounds, which come home to the bosoms and hearts of all.

"Poet and Saint, to him is justly given,
The two most sacred names of earth and heaven."

In the productions of Milton and Young, there is not much of practical, and still less of experimental, piety. They confined themselves chiefly to the theory of religion. Cowper, on the contrary, whose views of the great leading truths of Christianity were equally, if not more comprehensive, describes, with unequalled simplicity and beauty, those less splendid, but not less useful, parts of religion, which his predecessors had left almost untouched: hence the superiority of his muse to theirs in these respects. No uninspired orator ever so happily and so strikingly described the operations of Divine grace upon the human soul. The gospel had come home to him, not in word only, but in demonstration of the Spirit, and in power. He not only possessed a comprehensive knowledge of the Christian system, which enabled him, whenever he had occasion for it, to describe and illustrate, with all the force and beauty of poetic enchantment, that solid foundation on which the Christian builds his hopes, but he had himself felt the astonishing efficacy of these truths on the heart, when truly and cordially received. This accounts for the unrivalled felicity with which he describes the happy influence of Christianity in all cases where it is rightly embraced, unless, as in his own case, its influence be prevented by some unaccountable bodily distemper. Treating the great peculiarities of the Christian system—the depravity of man—the necessity of regeneration—the efficacy of the atonement—access to God, through the Divine Spirit—justification by faith, with others of a like kind, not merely as subjects of inquiry, but as things which had been to him matters of actual experience, it is no wonder that his muse sometimes carried him to a depth of Christian feeling, unsung, and even unattempted before. As he himself, in his poem on Charity, beautifully sings—

"When one that holds communion with the skies
Has fill'd his urn, where these pure waters rise,
And once more mingles with us meaner things,
'Tis e'en as if an angel shook his wings;
Immortal fragrance fills the circuit wide,
That tells us whence his treasures are supplied."

"Cowper," as Mr. Hayley justly observes, "accomplished as a poet, the sublimest object of poetic ambition—he has dissipated the general prejudice that held it hardly possible for a modern author to succeed in sacred poetry. He has proved that verse and devotion are natural allies. He has shown that true poetical genius cannot be more honorably or more delightfully employed than in diffusing through the heart and mind of man a filial affection for his Maker, with a firm and cheerful trust in his word. He has sung in a strain, in some degree at least equal to the great subject, the blessed advent of the Messiah; and perhaps it will not be saying too much, to assert that his poetry will have no inconsiderable influence in preparing the world for the cordial reception of all the rich blessings which this event was intended to introduce."

Up to the period when Cowper's productions were given to the world, it was foolishly imagined impossible successfully to employ the graces and beauties of poetry on the side of virtue. A great modern critic had inconsiderately declared that "contemplative piety cannot be poetical." Had he asserted only, that it had very rarely been so, the assertion would not have been unjust. It would, indeed, have coincided with the views entertained by Cowper himself; for, of his predecessors' productions, with few exceptions, no one could have formed a more correct opinion, as will appear by the following lines:

"Pity religion has so seldom found
A skilful guide into poetic ground!
The flowers would spring where'er she deigned to stray,
And every muse attend her in her way.
Virtue indeed meets many a rhyming friend,
And many a compliment politely penned;
But unattired in that becoming vest
Religion weaves for her, and half undressed,
Stands in the desert, shivering and forlorn,
A wintry figure, like a withered thorn."

This censure, severely as it may fall on most of Cowper's predecessors, is not unjust. His muse, however, was the first to show that poetry may be made the handmaid to religion. When he gave to the world the productions of his unrivalled pen, they saw, indeed,

———"a bard all fire,
Touched with a coal from heaven, assume the lyre,
And tell the world, still kindling as he sung,
With more than mortal music on his tongue,
That he who died below, and reigns above,
Inspires the song, and that his name was love."

Cowper's religious sentiments were undoubtedly Calvinistic, and though his views of divine truth were generally unexceptionable, they were sometimes rather strongly tinged with the peculiarities of that system. On no occasion, however, that comes within our recollection, do we find him speaking of the character of God in such terms as would lead any, who were sincerely desirous of approaching Him in the way of his own appointment, to doubt of gracious reception at his hands. His own case, indeed, must be excepted, as his melancholy depression ever led him to regard himself as a solitary instance of the rejection of God and of the reversal of his decree. It could seldom, if ever, be inferred from any of his representations, that he thought the Divine Being, by the mere excercise of his sovereignty, continued any of his creatures, except, indeed, it were himself, in a state of suffering in the present life, or placed them beyond the means of escaping from misery in the future. His views of the atonement, and of the infinite extent of its efficacy, were such as led him, whenever he had occasion to advert to it, to represent it truly, as a solid ground of hope and comfort, to every converted sinner, whatever might have been his character. He felt an entire conviction that he whose infinite compassion had prompted him to make provision for the restoration of fallen man to his favor, intended it to be universally beneficial; and that the perverseness and obstinacy of men were the only reasons why it was not so. That he should have regarded his own case as an exception, and should, consequently, have passed the greater part of his life in the bitterness of despair, is a difficulty which we are persuaded will, in the present life, for ever remain unaccounted for. To assert, as some have done, on no other foundation than that of mere opinion, that had he not been religious he would never have been melancholy, is utterly at variance with all the leading facts of his history. To every well regulated mind, it will be abundantly evident, that, whatever reasons may be assigned for the affecting peculiarity of his case, the deep concern he felt for religion could never have been the cause. On the contrary, it will appear clearly to have been much more likely to become the best preventive, as, in fact, the events of his life prove it to have been, though, owing to some unaccountable organic conformation, much less completely than might have been hoped.

No person was ever more alive to the benefits of real friendship, or had ever formed more correct conceptions of its obligations and delights. His inimitable stanzas, on this most interesting subject, which are perhaps superior to any thing that has ever been written upon it, prove incontestibly that he understood what were its indispensable prerequisites, and his whole conduct through life shows that he felt the full force of that friendship which he so admirably described. It is difficult to make extracts from a poem, every line of which is almost alike excellent: we cannot, however, deny ourselves the pleasure of presenting our readers with the following admirable lines:

Who hopes a friend, should have a heart
Himself, well furnished for the part,
And ready on occasion,
To show the virtue that he seeks;
For 'tis a union that bespeaks
A just reciprocation.

A man renowned for repartee
Will seldom scruple to make free
With friendship's finest feeling;
Will thrust a dagger at your breast,
And tell you 'twas a special jest,
By way of balm for healing.

Beware of tattlers! keep your ear
Close stopt against the tales they bear,
Fruits of their own invention!
The separation of chief friends,
Is what their business most intends,
Their sport is your dissension.

Religion should extinguish strife,
And make a calm of human life:
But even those who differ
Only on topics left at large,
How fiercely will they meet, and charge;
No combatants are stiffer.

Then judge, before you choose your man,
As circumspectly as you can;
And having made election,
See that no disrespect of yours,
Such as a friend but ill endures,
Enfeeble his affection

As similarity of mind,
Or something not to be defined,
First rivets our attention;
So manners decent and polite,
The same we practised at first sight,
Must save it from declension.

The man who hails you Tom, or Jack,
And proves, by thumping on your back.
His sense of your great merit;
Is such a friend, that one had need
Be very much his friend indeed,
To pardon, or to bear it.

Some friends make this their prudent plan—
Say little, and hear all you can;
Safe policy, but hateful!
So barren sands imbibe the shower,
But render neither fruit nor flower,
Unpleasant and ungrateful.

They whisper trivial things, and small;
But to communicate at all
Things serious, deem improper.
Their feculence and froth they show,
But keep their best contents below,
Just like a simmering copper.

Pursue the theme, and you will find
A disciplin'd and furnish'd mind
To be at least expedient;
And, after summing all the rest,
Religion ruling in the breast,
A principal ingredient.

True friendship has, in short, a grace,
More than terrestrial, in its face,
That proves it heaven-descended:
Man's love of woman not so pure,
Nor when sincerest, so secure,
To last till life is ended."

Cowper was, through life, the warm, though not the blind admirer of the British constitution; and though he made no pretensions to the character of a politician, yet he took the liveliest interest in all that related to the honor and prosperity of his country. In one of his letters to Mr. Newton he thus writes:—"I learned when I was a boy, being the son of a staunch Whig, and a man that loved his country, to glow with that patriotic enthusiasm which is apt to break forth into poetry, or at least to prompt a person, if he has any inclination that way, to poetical endeavors. After I was grown up, and while I lived in the Temple, I produced several half-penny ballads, two or three of which had the honor of being popular. But unhappily, the ardor I felt upon the occasion, disdaining to be confined within the bounds of fact, pushed me upon uniting the prophetical with the poetical character, and defeated its own purpose. I am glad it did. The less there is of this sort in my productions the better. The stage of national affairs is such a fluctuating scene, that an event which seems probable to-day becomes impossible to-morrow; and unless a man were indeed a prophet, he cannot, but with the greatest hazard of losing his labor, bestow his rhymes upon future contingencies, which perhaps are never to take place, but in his own wishes and in the reveries of his own fancy."

The time which Cowper bestowed upon his translation of Homer, and the indefatigable diligence with which he labored in this great work, notwithstanding his melancholy depression, until he had completed it, prove that he was not easily to be diverted from what he had once undertaken; and that few men were equal and perhaps none superior, to him, in those essential qualities of a truly great mind—industry and perseverance.

It might be imagined that Cowper's very retired manner of life, had deprived him of that manly independence of mind, which is a prime constituent in the character of every great man. Several incidents, however, are related of him, which go to prove that such was very far from being the case. His conduct to Mr. Unwin and Mr. Newton, who both in their turns, at different times, thought themselves entitled to complain of some neglect, proves that he allowed not the affection of friendship to intrench upon his right to judge at all times for himself. Alluding to Mr. Newton's displeasure, he remarks to another friend:—"If he says more on the subject I shall speak freely, and perhaps please him less than I have already done." Almost in the same breath, however, evincing his deep knowledge of human nature, he adds:—"But we shall jumble together again, as people, who have an affection for each other at the bottom, never fail to do." On one occasion, some friend having remarked to Cowper, that he knew a person who wished to see a sample of his verse, before subscribing for his edition of Homer, he replied—"that when he dealt in wine, or cloth, or cheese, he would give samples, but of verse never." The same independence he evinced on another occasion, writing to the friend whom he had employed to negotiate for the publication of his second volume of poetry, he remarks—"If Johnson should stroke his chin, look up to the ceiling, and cry nymph! anticipate him, I beseech you, at once, by saying, that you know I should be very sorry he should undertake for me to his own disadvantage, or that my volume should be in any degree pressed upon him."

The depressive malady under which Cowper labored through the greatest part of his life, might naturally be supposed to have disqualified him entirely for the kind office of comforting those who were in distress: in truth, however, no one had better learned the divine skill of strengthening the weak mind, of encouraging the timid and trembling believer, of lifting up the weak hands that were hanging down, wiping the tear of sorrow from the mournful eye, and directing the Christian to look alone to heaven for support in all his difficulties. His poems abound with passages the most tender and consolatory; enforcing with an eloquence, persuasive and almost irresistible, humble submission to the Divine will, in circumstances the most discouraging. The following lines, forming part of a poetic epistle to a lady in France, show how admirably he could pour the healing oil of comfort into the wounded spirits of others, though he was unable to assuage the grief of his own:—

"The path of sorrow, and that path alone,
Leads to the land where sorrow is unknown.
No trav'ller ever reached that blessed abode,
Who found not thorns and briers on the road.
The world may dance along the flowery plain,
Cheer'd as they go by many a sprightly strain.
* * * * *
But He, who knew what human hearts would prove,
How slow to learn the dictates of his love;
That hard by nature, and of stubborn will,
A life of ease would make them harder still;
In pity to a chosen few, designed
To escape the common ruin of their kind,
And said—Go spend them in the vale of tears!
Oh balmy gales of soul-reviving air,
Oh salutary streams that murmur there,
These flowing from the fount of grace above!
Those breathed from lips of everlasting love!
The flinty soil indeed their feet annoys,
Chill blasts of trouble nip their springing joys.
An envious world will interpose its frown,
To mar delights superior to its own,
And many a pang, experienced still within,
Reminds them of their hated inmate, sin!
But ills of every shape, of every name,
Transformed to blessings, miss their cruel aim,
And every moment's calm that soothes the breast,
Is given in earnest of eternal rest.
Ah! be not sad! although thy lot be cast
Far from the flock, and in a boundless waste;
No shepherd's tents within thy view appear,
But the Chief Shepherd even there is near.
Thy tender sorrows and thy plaintive strain
Flow in a foreign land, but not in vain;
Thy tears all issue from a source divine,
And every drop bespeaks a Saviour thine.

Notwithstanding the almost unmitigated severity of Cowper's sufferings, there were seasons in which he enjoyed some internal tranquillity, and was enabled to

exercise a trembling, if not an unshaken confidence in the Almighty. It was undoubtedly on one of these occasions that he penned the following lines—

"I see, or think I see,
A glimmering from afar—
A beam of day that shines for me
To save me from despair.
Forerunner of the sun,
It marks the pilgrim's way:
I'll gaze upon it while I run,
And watch the rising day."

Had it not been for Cowper's depressive malady, he would certainly have been, on all occasions, the most lively and agreeable companion. Even as it was, it must not be imagined that in his conversation he was never sprightly and cheerful. Frequently, when his own heart was suffused with grief, arising from the severity and peculiarity of his malady, such an air of innocent pleasantry and humor, delicate and perfectly natural, ran through his conversation and correspondence, as could not fail to delight all who happened to be in his company, or who were occasionally favored with the productions of his pen. It would be easy to produce proofs of this, both from his poetic and prose productions. His rhyming letter, to Mr. Newton, in which there is such a happy mixture of the grave and the gay, as no other writer could produce, evinces the occasional sprightliness of his mind. "My very dear friend, I am going to send, what, when you have read, you may scratch your head, and say, I suppose there's nobody knows, whether what I have got, be verse or not; by the tune and the time, it ought to be rhyme, but if it be, did ever you see, of late or yore, such a ditty before?

"If I have writ charity, not for popularity, but as well as I could, in hopes to do good; and if the reviewer, should say, to be sure, the gentleman's muse, wears Methodist shoes, you may know by her pace, and talk about grace, that she and her bard, have little regard for taste and fashions, and ruling passions, and hoydening play, of the modern day; and though she assume a borrowed plume, and now and then wear a tittering air, 'tis only her plan, to catch if she can, the giddy and gay, as they go that way, by a production on a new construction; she has baited her trap, in hopes to snap, all that may come, with a sugar-plum. His opinion in this will not be amiss; 'tis what I intend, my principal end, and if I succeed, and folks should read till a few are brought to a serious thought, I shall think I am paid, for all I have said, and all I have done, though I have run, many a time, after a rhyme, as far from hence, to the end of my sense, and by hook or by crook, write another book, if I live and am here another year.

"I have heard before, of a room with a floor, laid upon springs, and such like things, with so much art, in every part, that when you went in, you were forced to begin a minute pace, with an air and a grace, swimming about, now in and now out, with a deal of state, in a figure of eight, without pipe or string, or any such thing; and now I have writ, in a rhyming fit, what will make you dance, and as you advance, will keep you still, though against your will, dancing away, alert and gay, till you come to the end, of what I have penned, which that you may do, ere madam and you, are quite worn out, with jigling about, I take my leave, and here you receive, a bow profound, down to the ground, from your humble me,

W. C."

The following jeu d' esprit, written by the poet, as descriptive of one of his rural excursions, through the whole of which runs a strain of pleasantry, innocent, and perfectly natural, shows that his life was not one unbroken series of despair, but that he enjoyed, occasionally, at least, some lucid intervals, when, to gratify his friends, he would trifle in rhyme with an affectionate and endearing gaiety. As it has never been published in any of his works, the reader will not regret its having a place here.

I sing of a journey to Clifton,*
We would have performed if we could;
Without cart or barrow to lift on
Poor Mary or me through the mud.
Sle, sla, slud,
Stuck in the mud,
Oh, it is pretty to wade through a flood.

So away we went slipping and sliding,
Hop, hop—a la mode de deux frogs;
'Tis near as good walking as riding,
When ladies are dressed in their clogs.
Wheels, no doubt,
Go briskly about,
But they clatter and rattle, and make such a rout.

DIALOGUE.

SHE.—"Well—now I protest it is charming,
How finely the weather improves;
That *cloud*, though, is rather alarming,
How slowly and stately it moves."

HE.—"Pshaw, never mind,
'Tis not in the wind,
We are travelling south and shall leave it behind.'

SHE.—"I am glad we are come for an airing,
For folks may be pounded and penn'd,
Until they grow rusty, not caring
To stir half a mile to an end.'

HE.—"The longer we stay,
The longer we may;
It's a folly to think about weather or way."

SHE.—"But now I begin to be frighted,
If I fall, what a way I shall roll
I am glad the bridge was indicted,
Stay! stop! I am sunk in a hole."

HE.—"Nay, never care,
'Tis a common affair;
You'll not be the last that will set a foot there."

SHE.—"Let me breathe now a little, and ponder
On what it were better to do;
That terrible lane I see yonder,
I think we shall never get through."

HE.—"So think I,—
But by the by,
We never shall know, if we never should try."

SHE.—"But should we get there, how shall we get home?
What a terrible deal of bad road we have passed,
Slipping and sliding; and if we should come
To a difficult state, I am ruined at last.
Oh, this lane!
Now it is plain,
That struggling and striving is labor in vain."

HE.—"Stick fast there, while I go and look."

SHE.—"Don't go away, for fear I should fall."

HE.—"I have examined it every nook,
And what you have here is a sample of all:
Come wheel around,
The dirt we have found,
Would buy an estate at a farthing a pound."

Now sister Ann,* the guitar you must take,
Set it and sing it, and make it a song;
I have varied the verse for variety's sake,
And cut it off short because it was long.
'Tis hobbling and lame,
Which critics won't blame,
For the sense and the sound they say should be the same.

As a writer, Cowper's powers of description, both in poetry and prose, were of the highest order; equalled by few, and excelled by none. His richly cultivated mind, united to an imagination as brilliant as it was chaste, enabled him to paint the visible beauties of the material, as well as the ideal charms of the moral world, with an ease and felicity equally delightful. No one could describe the feelings of the heart with more vivid force, or knew better how to levy contributions on the rich and varied scenes of nature. He possessed all the requisite qualifications for a poet of the highest class;—a familiar acquaintance with the ancient classics;—a comprehensive mind, well stored with accurate information on almost every subject; a fertile genius; a rich fancy; an excursive but *chaste* imagination; to all which were added an extensive knowledge of the varied feelings of the human heart, and a most devout regard to the solemn claims of religion.

* A village near Olney.

* Lady Austin.

To take a comprehensive review of the poet's original productions, in the order in which they appeared, would require a much greater space than it would be prudent to devote to it here. TABLE TALK is a dialogue, carried on with uncommon spirit and vivacity, in which a variety of most interesting topics are happily introduced and descanted on with great force and beauty. The PROGRESS OF ERROR is much more serious than its predecessor; and though it contains passages of unrivalled excellence, it exhibits occasional marks of weakness, and is less beautiful than any other in the volume.

TRUTH exhibits a wonderful combination of different powers; in which passages, humorous and affecting, are scattered with delightful profusion.

EXPOSTULATION, founded on a sermon by Mr. Newton, is an impassioned appeal to men, in almost all conditions, on behalf of religion; it abounds with imagery, grand, impressive, and awful, exhibiting proofs of the poet's deep acquaintance with the inspired prophetic records. HOPE is less impassioned than its predecessor, but not less beautiful. It is written throughout with great elegance, beauty, and force, and the sentiments it breathes are purely evangelical. CHARITY is a poem of less vigor, but equally instructive, admonitory, and delightful.

In CONVERSATION, the poet appears in the character of a teacher of manners, as well as of morals, and delineates with exquisite and unerring skill, many of the follies and frailties of life. The loquacious—the incommunicative—the noisy and tumultuous—the disputatious—the scrupulous and irresolute—the furious and intractable—the ludicrous—the censorious—the peevish—the bashful—with others of similar kind, may here find their character drawn by the pen of a master, in the liveliest colors, and with striking accuracy.

Many excellent and judicious remarks are to be found in this admirable poem, on the manner in which conversation, to make it really edifying, must be carried on; and the certain benefits resulting from it, where it is so conducted, are forcibly and clearly pointed out.

RETIREMENT, will be read with delight by all, but especially by those who are looking forward to that season when—

"Hackney'd in business, wearied at that oar,
Which thousands, once fast chain'd to, quit no more,
But which, when life at ebb runs weak and low,
All wish, or seem to wish, they could forego."

The poet happily ridicules the fallacy of supposing it impossible to be pious while following the active pursuits of life—

"Truth is not local, God alike pervades
And fills the world of traffic and the shades,
And may be fear'd amidst the busiest scenes,
Or scorn'd where business never intervenes."

In the same happy strain he exposes the absurdity of seeking retirement as an excuse for indolence.

"An idler is a watch that wants both hands,
As useless if it goes as when it stands.
* * * * *
Absence of occupation is not rest;
A mind quite vacant is a mind distrest."

The TASK, however, is by far the poet's greatest production, and had he written nothing else, would have immortalized his name, and given him a place among the highest class of poets. Here his muse kindled into its happiest inspirations, and burst forth into its sublimest strains. Commencing with objects the most familiar, and in a manner inimitably playful, the poet touches on a vast variety of subjects, many of them unsung, and unattempted before, scattering, wherever he goes,

"From grave to gay, from lively to severe."

an exuberance of beauty and elegance, that enchains the reader, carrying him through the muse's adventurous track, without the least restraint, and without feeling a moment's uneasiness. The transitions are the happiest imaginable; after delineating one object with matchless felicity and force, presenting it in shapes almost endlessly diversified, ere he is aware of it, another and another starts up before the reader, with magical effect, but without the slightest confusion, or the least violation of perspicuity. This admirable poem may be repeatedly read with increasing delight. It yields an almost inexhaustible source of pleasure and instruction. The reader rises from its perusal, not only filled with astonishment at the mighty powers of its author, but what is of equal, and perhaps of greater importance, with feelings of the most unfeigned esteem for the poet, and with sentiments of benevolence towards all mankind.

The letters of Cowper are unquestionably among the best productions of this interesting class of writings that are to be found in the English language. Easy and natural, and every where simple and elegant, without the slightest affectation of formality, or the most distant approach to that studied and artificial style, which invariably destroys the beauty of such productions, they never fail to interest and delight the reader; and will ever be regarded as perfect models of epistolary correspondence. Their peculiar charm is, perhaps, to be attributed chiefly, if not entirely, to that affectionate glow of pure friendship, by which they are so pre-eminently distinguished. Fascinating as they are to every reader of taste, for the chaste, yet unornamented style in which they are composed; for their easy and natural transitions; and for their concise, yet sufficiently copious descriptions, it is to that sprightly and genuine affection which runs through the whole of them, causing the reader to peruse them with almost as much interest as if they were addressed to him personally, that they are principally indebted for their claim to superiority.

To the above remarks on Cowper's letters, we have great pleasure in adding the following testimony of the late distinguished scholar and writer, the Rev. Robert Hall, of Bristol, whose eloquence was unrivalled, and whose powers being all consecrated to the cause of religion, rendered him an ornament to the age in which he lived. In a letter to Rev. J. Johnson, Cowper's justly esteemed relative, he thus writes:—"It is quite unnecessary to say that I perused the letters with great admiration and delight. I have always considered the letters of Mr. Cowper as the finest specimens of the epistolary style in our language. To an air of inimitable ease and carelessness, they unite a high degree of correctness, such as could result only from the clearest intellect, combined with the most finished taste. I have scarcely found a single word which is capable of being exchanged for a better. Literary errors I can discern none. The selection of the words, and the structure of the periods, are inimitable; they present as striking a contrast as can well be conceived, to the turgid verbosity which passes at present for fine writing, and which bears a great resemblance to the degeneracy which marks the style of Ammianus Marcellinus, as compared to that of Cicero or Livy. A perpetual effort and struggle is made to supply the place of vigor; garish and dazzling colors are substituted for chaste ornament; and the hideous distortions of weakness, for native strength. In my humble opinion, the study of Cowper's prose may, on this account, be as useful in forming the taste of young people as his poetry."

Poets have almost invariably been charged with adulation, whenever they have ventured to eulogize an individual, however much he may have been distinguished by his virtues and his talents. In many cases, they have undoubtedly richly merited this censure; but there are some honorable exceptions, and amongst this class Cowper is pre-eminently distinguished. Of this wicked and foolish practice he had the utmost abhorrence; and in some instances it may be doubted whether he did not carry his aversion to flattery, almost to an opposite extreme; withholding praise where he knew it was due. The following lines occur almost at the commencement of his Table Talk. After painting the portrait of that most virtuous monarch, George the Third, in language as just as it is beautiful, he abruptly exclaims—

"Guard what you say; the patriotic tribe
Will sneer, and charge you with a bribe—a bribe!
The worth of his three kingdoms I defy
To lure me to the baseness of a lie:
And of all lies, (be that one poet's boast,)
The lie that flatters, I abhor the most."

In the character of Cowper there was not the slightest particle of ostentation; on no occasion did he assume any airs of consequence; he never aimed, or wished to be what he was not. Every thing in the shape of affectation was the object of his disgust. He loved simplicity without rudeness, and detested that squeamish mimicry of fine feeling which not unfrequently, either under the assumed garb of superior sanctity, or of ardent friendship, conceals the most pitiable imbecility and ignorance.

It must be acknowledged that Cowper sometimes dipped his pen in gall. Some expressions the most bitterly sarcastic are to be found in his poems. Of his first volume it was said, by one of his friends, "There are many passages delicate, many sublime, many beautiful, many tender, many sweet, and many acrimonious." Cowper's satire, however, though keen and powerful as a whip of scorpions, was employed only to expose and punish the openly profligate, and the hypocritical professors of religion. Every thing in the shape of deception he ever held in perfect detestation. The castigation of vice, of ignorance, or of dissimulation, was his object, when he became a satirist. If he held up philosophy to ridicule, it was that glare of false philosophy, which, instead of being beneficial to men, only led them from the plain and beaten track of truth, into paths of error and misery. He never wantonly, for the sake only of his own gratification, inflicted his satiric lash on a single individual. He became a satirist, not to give vent to a waspish, revengeful, and malicious disposition, (to feelings of this kind he was an entire stranger,) but for the same purpose as the holy prophets of old were satirists, to expose, in mercy to mankind, the hideous deformity of those vices, which have ever been the fruitful parents of misery to mankind.

The exquisite sensibility of Cowper, and the real goodness of his disposition, with his entire abhorrence of cruelty, whether practised by man towards his own species, or towards any part of the Creator's works, are evinced by the following striking lines—

"I would not enter on my list of friends,
Though graced with polished manners and fine sense,
Yet wanting sensibility, the man
Who needlessly sets foot upon a worm.
An inadvertent step may crush the snail
That crawls at evening in the public path;
But he that has humanity, forewarned,
Will tread aside, and let the reptile live.
Ye, therefore, who love mercy, teach your sons
To love it too. The spring-time of our years
Is soon dishonored and defiled in most
By budding ills, that ask a prudent hand
To check them. But, alas! none sooner shoots,
If unrestrained, into luxuriant growth
Than cruelty, most devilish of them all!
Mercy, to him that shows it, is the rule
And righteous limitation of its art,
By which Heaven moves in pardoning guilty man;
And he that shows none, being ripe in years,
And conscious of the outrage he commits,
Shall seek it, and not find it, in his turn.
Distinguished much by reason, and still more
By our capacity of grace divine,
From creatures that exist but for our sake,
Which, having served us, perish, we are held
Accountable: and God, some future day,
Will reckon with us roundly for the abuse
Of what he deems no mean or trivial trust!"

Liberty has always been the soul-inspiring theme of poets. On no subject has the muse sung in sweeter strains, or towered to more sublime heights. Cowper has given ample proofs that his muse felt all the fire of this ennobling theme. In his Table Talk, some beautiful lines will be found on this interesting subject, so dear to the heart of every Englishman; but in his most masterly production, the Task, he thus sings—

"'Tis liberty alone that gives the flower
Of fleeting life its lustre and perfume;
And we are weeds without it. All constraint
Except what wisdom lays on evil men,
Is evil: hurts the faculties, impedes
Their progress in the road of science; blinds
The eyesight of discovery; and begets
In those that suffer it a sordid mind,—
Bestial—a meagre intellect, unfit
To be the tenant of man's noble form.
Thee, therefore, still, blameworthy as thou art,
Thee I account still happy, and the chief
Among the nations, seeing thou art free,
My native nook of earth! Thy clime is rude,
Replete with vapors, and disposes much
All hearts to sadness, and none more than mine;
Yet, being free, I love thee for the sake
Of that one feature, can be well content,
Disgraced as thou hast been, poor as thou art,
To seek no sublunary rest beside.
But once enslaved, farewell. I could endure
Chains nowhere patiently; and chains at home,
Where I am free by birthright, not at all!"

The liberty of Cowper was not, however, that lawless restraint which, under the sacred name of liberty, would burst asunder all those bands that hold society together, and introduce confusion infinitely more to be dreaded than the most absolute despotism. It was not the wild and unrestrained liberty of the ferocious mob; it was the liberty that is compatible with wholesome restraint, and with the due administration of law. It was the liberty not of disorder but of discipline, as will be seen by the following beautiful lines—

"Let discipline employ her wholesome arts;
Let magistrates alert perform their parts,
Not skulk, or put on a prudential mask,
As if their duty was a desperate task.
Let active laws apply the needful curb,
To guard the peace that riot would disturb;
And *liberty*, preserved from wild excess,
Shall raise no feuds for armies to suppress.
When Tumult lately burst his prison door,
And set plebeian thousands in a roar,
When he usurped Authority's just place,
And dared to look his master in the face;
When the rude rabble's watch-word was—'Destroy!'
And blazing London seemed a second Troy!
Liberty blushed, and hung her drooping head—
Beheld their progress with the deepest dread;
Blushed that effects like these she could produce,
Worse than the deeds of galley-slaves let loose:
She loses in such storms her very name,
And fierce Licentiousness should bear the blame!"

Powerful as were the charms of subjects like these to Cowper, there were others of a different character which he held as more dear, and ever regarded as more important. Like his great predecessor, Milton, he had made the sacred Scriptures his constant study; not so much because he admired the sublime imagery of the holy penman (alive as he was to their beauties in this respect,) as because he felt the full force of divine truth upon his heart; which, notwithstanding the severe pressure of his malady, would sometimes yield him an interval of pleasure. It was undoubtedly on one of these happy occasions that he penned the following lines, so strikingly descriptive of the refined pleasure with which the Christian can view the works of Nature—

"He looks abroad into the varied field
Of Nature; and though poor, perhaps, compared
With those whose mansions glitter in his sight,
Calls the delightful scenery all his own:
His are the mountains, and the valleys his,
And the resplendent rivers: his to enjoy
With a propriety that none can feel,
But who, with filial confidence inspired,
Can lift to heaven an unpresumptuous eye,
And smiling say—My father made them all!
Are they not his by a peculiar right?
And by an emphasis of interest his
Whose eyes they fill with tears of holy joy;
Whose heart with praise, and whose exalted mind
With worthy thoughts of that unwearied love
That planned, and built, and still upholds a world
So clothed with beauty, for rebellious man?
Yes! Ye may fill your garners, ye that reap
The loaded soil; and ye may waste much good
In senseless riot; but ye will not find
In feast, or in the chase, in song or dance,
A liberty like his, who, unimpeached
Of usurpation, and to no man's wrong
Appropriates nature as his Father's work,
And has a richer use of yours than you."

Although Cowper, towards the close of his life, before he received his Majesty's pension, owing to the heavy expenses occasioned by his own and Mrs. Unwin's illness, was scarcely able to keep his expenditure within the limits of his income, yet he was never once heard to complain, nor even to indulge the slightest disposition to be otherwise than contented in the station where Providence had placed him. Writing to his intimate friend, Mr. Hill, on one occasion, whom he appears to have made his treasurer, he remarks:—"Your tidings respecting the slender pittance yet to come, are, as you observe, of a melancholy cast. Not being gifted, however, by nature with the means of acquiring much,

it is well that she has given me a disposition to be contented with little. I have now been so many years habituated to small matters, that I should probably find myself incommoded by greater, and, may I but be enabled to shift, as I have been hitherto, unsatisfied wishes will not trouble me much."

On another occasion, to the same individual he writes: —"I suppose you are sometimes troubled on my account, but you need not. I have no doubt that it will be seen, when my days are closed, that I served a Master who would not suffer me to want any thing that was good for me. He said of Jacob, 'I will surely do thee good;' and this he said not for his sake only, but for ours also, if we trust in him. This thought relieves me from the greatest part of the distress I should else suffer in my present circumstances, and enables me to sit down peacefully upon the wreck of my fortune." The same sentiment is still more forcibly expressed in the following lines:—

"Fair is the lot that's cast for me:
I have an Advocate in Thee:
They whom the world caresses most,
Have no such privilege to boast.
Poor though I am, despised, forgot,
Yet God, my God, forgets me not,
And he is safe, and must succeed,
For whom the Lord vouchsafes to plead."

Perhaps no individual ever felt more fully the power of religion in his heart, or embodied it more completely in his life, than Cowper. The apprehensions, for his ultimate safety, by which he was so continually harassed, depressive as was their influence on his mind, never relaxed, in any degree, that severe watchfulness which religion had taught him to exercise over his thoughts and conduct. On the contrary, they seemed rather to have operated as a continual check upon those corrupt inclinations which are common to our fallen nature; and to which, even Cowper, was not a stranger. It would be ridiculous to say he had no imperfections; he felt them; he often mourned over them, and the vivid perception he had of them, associated, as it invariably was, with a powerful constitutional tendency to melancholy, often filled him with the greatest anxiety and dread. His conceptions of the purity of that sublime religion taught us in the gospel, and of the paramount importance of a holy life in its professors, were such as led him to regard the least deviation from the strict line of Christian duty, in his own case at least, as an entire disqualification for the reception of spiritual comfort. No individual's conscience was ever more tremblingly alive to the importance of habitual watchfulness and uniform consistency of conduct. He could make ample allowances for the imperfections of others, but nothing could prevail upon him to make any for his own.

The notice we have already taken of Cowper's productions, renders it unnecessary that we should view them any further in detail. We cannot, however, suppress the following admirable observations of an anonymous critic, subjoined to Mr. Hayley's Life of Cowper: "The noblest benefits and delights of poetry can be but rarely produced, because all the requisites for producing them so seldom meet. A vivid mind and happy imitative power, may enable a poet to form glowing pictures of virtue, and almost produce in himself a short-lived enthusiasm of goodness. But although even these transient and factitious movements of mind may serve to produce grand and delightful effusions of poetry, yet when the best of these are compared with the poetic productions of a genuine lover of virtue, a discerning judgment will scarcely fail to mark the difference. A simplicity of conception and expression; a conscious and therefore unaffected dignity; an instinctive adherence to sober reason, even amid the highest flights; an uniform justness and consistency of thought; a glowing, yet temperate ardor of feeling; a peculiar felicity, both in the choice and combination of terms, by which even the plainest words acquire the truest character of eloquence, and which is rarely to be found except where a subject is not only intimately known, but cordially loved; these, I conceive, are the features peculiar to a real votary of virtue, and which must of course give to his strains a perfection of effect never to be attained by the poet of inferior moral endowments. I believe it will be granted that all these qualities were never more perfectly combined than in the poetry of Milton. And I think, too, there will be little doubt that the next to him, in every one of these instances, beyond all comparison, is *Cowper*. The genius of the latter did certainly not lead him to emulate the songs of the Seraphim. But though he pursues a lower walk of poetry than his great master, he appears no less the enraptured votary of pure unmixed goodness. Nay, perhaps he may in this one respect possess some peculiar excellences which may make him seem more the bard of Christianity. That divine religion infinitely exalts but it also deeply humbles the mind it inspires. It gives majesty to the thoughts, but it impresses meekness on the manners, and diffuses tenderness through the feelings. It combines sensibility and fortitude, the lowliness of the child, and the magnanimity of the hero."

"The grandest features of the Christian character were never more gloriously exemplified than in that spirit which animates the whole of Milton's poetry. His own Michael does not impress us with the idea of a purer, or more awful virtue than that which we feel in every portion of his majestic verse; and he no less happily indicates the source from which his excellence was derived, by the bright beams which he ever and anon reflects upon us from the sacred Scriptures. But the milder graces of the gospel are certainly less apparent. What we behold is so awful, it might also have inspired a wish, that a spirit, equally pure and heavenly, might be raised to illustate, with like felicity, the more attractive and gentler influences of our divine religion. In Cowper, above any poet that ever lived, would such a wish seem to be fulfilled. In his charming effusions we have the same spotless purity, the same elevated devotion, the same vital exercise of every noble and exalted quality of the mind, the same devotedness to the sacred Scriptures, and to the peculiar doctrines of the gospel. The difference is, that instead of an almost reprehensive dignity, we have the sweetest familiarity; instead of the majestic grandeur of the Old Testament, we have the winning graces of the New; instead of those thunders by which angels were discomfited, we have, as it were, the still small voice of Him who was meek and lowly of heart. May we not then venture to assert, that from that spirit of devoted piety, which has rendered both these great men liable to the charge of religious enthusiasm, but which, in truth, raised the minds of both to a kind of happy residence

'In regions mild, of calm and serene air,
Above the smoke and stir of this dim spot,
Which men call earth—'

a peculiar character has been derived to the poetry of them both, which distinguishes their compositions from those of almost all the world besides. I have already enumerated some of the superior advantages of a truly virtuous poet, and presumed to state, that these are realized, in an unexampled degree, in Milton and Cowper. That they both owed this eminence to their *vivid sense of religion*, will, I conceive, need no demonstration, except what will arise to every reader of taste and feeling on examining their works. It will here, I think, be seen at once, that that sublimity of conception, that delicacy of virtuous feeling, that majestic independence of mind, that quick relish for all the beauties of nature, at once so pure and so exquisite, which we find ever occurring in them both, could not have existed in the same unrivalled degree, if their devotion had been less intense, and of course their minds more dissipated amongst low and distracting objects."

To the above remarks on the poet's character, we cannot forbear subjoining the following exquisite picture of him, drawn by the Rev. Dr. Randolph, of Bath, on seeing his portrait by Lawrence:

"Sweet Bard, whose mind, thus pictured in thy face,
O'er every feature spreads a nobler grace;
Whose keen but softened eye appears to dart
A look of pity through the human heart:
To search the secrets of man's inward frame,
To weep with sorrow o'er his guilt and shame;
Sweet Bard, with whom in sympathy of choice,
I've oft-times left the world, at Nature's voice,
To join the song that all the creatures raise
To carrol forth their great Creator's praise;
Or, wrapt in visions of immortal day,
Have gazed on Truth in Zion's heavenly way.
Sweet Bard, may this, thine image, all I know,
Or ever may of Cowper's form below,
Teach one who views it with a Christian's love
To seek and find thee in the realms above."

REV. DR. RANDOLPH.

THE END.

THE LIFE

OF THE

REV. THOMAS SPENCER,

OF LIVERPOOL:

WITH

AN APPENDIX,

CONTAINING A SELECTION FROM HIS PAPERS,

AND

A POEM ON HIS DEATH, BY JAMES MONTGOMERY.

BY THOMAS RAFFLES,
HIS SUCCESSOR IN THE PASTORAL OFFICE.

(CHRISTIAN LIBRARY EDITION.)

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PREFACE.

THE volume now presented to the public, owes its origin to one of those mysterious events in Providence, which seem commissioned, at distant intervals to alarm and admonish the church of God. A loss so sudden, so awful, so universally deplored as that of Mr. Spencer, demanded improvement. Many impressive discourses were delivered on the sad occasion, several of which have issued from the press. But his *life* was not less instructive than his *death*; and the more it was contemplated by his friends, the more deeply they felt the importance of rescuing from oblivion those traits of his character, and circumstances of his history, by which their own private circles had been interested. Upon my acceptance of the solemn office from which he was so unexpectedly removed, his bereaved people, anxious to see some authorized memoirs of their beloved pastor embodied and preserved, committed the mournful duty to my hands. My respect for the honored dead, and attachment to the living, induced me to accept the charge: how I have executed the important trust reposed in me, I must now leave it with a candid public to decide.

Various causes have contributed to create the delay which has attended the publication of the book. It was with considerable difficulty that I collected the materials necessary for my purpose. I had imagined, from the general impression which prevailed, at least among Mr. Spencer's friends, of the propriety of such a publication, that information would have been spontaneously offered from every quarter whence it might be furnished. But in this I was disappointed; and it was some considerable time from the annunciation of my design, before I was sufficiently supplied to commence, with any degree of prudence, the composition of the volume.

In addition to this, the laborious duties of a new and most extensive charge, conspired often to suspend the prosecution of the work, for the appearance of which I knew many to be anxious, but none more so than myself.

Had I at first anticipated the extent of these Memoirs, I should most probably have shrunk from the undertaking. But the volume has grown almost imperceptibly beneath my hand. What I have recorded of the dear departed is strictly true, so far as the veracity of the most excellent men can warrant the assertion; and whatever opportunity the narrative has afforded of administering instruction I have gladly seized, and conscientiously improved, leaving the issue to a higher agent.

I have at length completed the work; and now, with the deepest humility and diffidence, I resign it to the blessing of God—the consideration of friendship—and the candor of the public. If to those who knew and loved him, it shall sometimes recall, with grateful emotions, the image and the excellencies of their departed friend; if it shall induce any to emulate the bright example of his manly virtues, and his Christian graces; or if but one, anticipating or commencing the laborious duties of the Christian ministry, shall derive from the contemplation of Spencer's character, instruction, caution, or encouragement—I am amply recompensed—I have not labored in vain!

THOMAS RAFFLES.

TOXTETH PARK, LIVERPOOL,
February 15, 1813.

LIFE OF THE REV. THOMAS SPENCER.

Seldom has a task so painfully arduous fallen to the lot of a biographer, as that which, in the mysterious providence of God, has unexpectedly devolved on me. The recollection of departed excellence, which a long series of years had developed and matured, is mingled with a melancholy feeling, and not unfrequently excites the tribute of a tear: but the individual who erects a monument to friendship, genius, usefulness, and piety, prematurely wrapt in the oblivion of the grave, must necessarily prosecute his mournful work with trembling hands, and with a bleeding heart. And yet the mind is soothed by the communication of its sorrow; the bosom is relieved of an oppressive burthen, while it tells the virtues of the friend it mourns; and the best feelings of the heart are satisfied with the consciousness, that instead of indulging in solitude, the luxury of unavailing grief, it has employed its powers to portray, in lively colors, for the improvement of the living, the excellencies of the beloved and pious dead. For myself, with mournful pleasure, I hasten to sketch the rude outline of one of the loveliest and most finished characters the present age has known:—pausing only to express my deep regret, that one so ripe for heaven, and yet so eminently useful upon earth, should be called from the important sphere he occupied, so soon; and that to hands so feeble should be committed—together with the solemn trust which he resigned in death, the painful duty of erecting this monument to his worth.

The Reverend Thomas Spencer, was born at Hertford, January 21, 1791. He occupied the third place out of four who surrounded his father's table, but shared equally with them in the tender and affectionate solicitude of parents, who, placed in the middle sphere of human life, were respectable for their piety, and highly esteemed in the circle in which a wise Providence had allotted them to move. It cannot be expected that any thing peculiarly interesting should mark the early childhood of a youth, retired from the observation of the world, and far removed from the presence of any of those circumstances which might be considered as favorable to the excitation of latent talent, or the display of early genius. And yet the years of his infancy and childhood were not undistinguished by some intimations of a superior mind, from which a thoughtful observer might have been induced to augur something of his future eminence, and which his amiable father it appears did with silence watch. He himself observes, in a hasty sketch of his life, which now lies before me—"As far back as I can recollect, my memory was complimented by many as being very retentive, and my progress in knowledge was more considerable than that of my school-fellows; a natural curiosity and desire of knowledge, I think I may say, without vanity, distinguished even the period of my infancy. I now remember questions that I asked when about four years old, which were rather singular, and which were confined chiefly to biblical subjects. No child could be more attached to places of worship, or could be more inquisitive about their concerns than myself; and I may add, more given to imitate the actions of the minister and clerk."*

When he had completed his fifth year, he suffered the severest earthly privation a child can know, in the loss of an affectionate mother. Though then too young correctly to appreciate a parent's worth, he deeply felt the stroke; and in the liveliest manner he recalls the impression which at that early period this melancholy circumstance produced upon his tender mind. "When the funeral sermon was preached I could not help noticing the grief which seemed to pervade every person present. Deeply affected myself, I recollect, that after the service, as I was walking about our little garden with my disconsolate father, I said to him, 'Father, what is the reason that so many people cried at the meeting this afternoon.'—He, adapting his language to my comprehension, said, 'They cried to see little children like you without a mother.'"* This event, which shed so deep a gloom upon his family, seems to have excited emotions of a serious nature in his mind never totally effaced.

From this time he applied himself with diligence and delight to the business of his school. There was at this early age something amiable and engaging in his manners; and this combined with his attention to his learning, soon secured the esteem and approbation of his respective teachers, and gained him, together with the first place and highest honors of his school, the character of "*a good boy.*" It is pleasing to mark the early combination of superior talent and sweetness of disposition in this extraordinary young man; and it would be well, did the patrons of early genius more deeply ponder the reflection, that the graces of a meek and quiet spirit are far more estimable than the rare qualities of a prematurely vigorous mind; and that the talents they cultivate with such anxious care, if unassociated with real excellence of soul, may render the idols of their fond adulation sources of anguish to themselves and incalculable mischief to mankind.

Whilst a school boy, he became passionately fond of novels, histories, adventures, &c. which he devoured with the greatest eagerness in numbers truly astonishing. The perusal of these he always preferred to play and other amusements adapted to his years. He delighted much in solitude; nor did he know a happiness superior to that of being alone, with one of his favorite books. He took no delight in the games of his companions, nor did he ever mingle in their little feuds. His natural levity, however, was excessive; and his wit, fed by the publications he so ardently perused, would often display itself in impurity of language to the laughter and amusement of his fellows. Yet he was not without his moments of serious reflection, and that of a very deep and dreadful kind.—He was often overwhelmed with religious considerations, and the solemn sermons he sometimes heard, filled him with terror and alarm. So intolerable at one period were the horrors of his mind, that in an agony of despair, he was tempted, as many have been before him, to destroy himself. Thus at an early age he became intimately acquainted with the depravity of his nature; and from the deep waters of spiritual distress through which he was called to pass, his soul imbibed an air of humility and a habit of watchfulness, which enabled him to meet with firmness the dangers of popularity, and to maintain a steady course, notwithstanding the press of sail he carried.

To these deep convictions of his early years may perhaps be traced the peculiarly pressing and empassioned manner of his address, when he strove to arouse the slumbering conscience, or direct the weary wanderer to the cross of Christ. The sacred poems and the passages of holy writ, which most

* MS. Memoirs.

* MS. Memoirs.

he loved, were those of a cast similar to that of his own fervent mind; and I have heard many tell, with tears, of the animation and rapture with which he would often repeat from that beautiful hymn of Henry Kirke White, his favorite author, whom in many shades of character he much resembled, and alas! too much in his early and lamented fate—

Once on the stormy seas I rode,
The storm was loud, the night was dark;
The ocean yawn'd, and rudely blow'd
The wind that toss'd my found'ring bark.

Deep horror then my vitals froze;
Death struck, I ceas'd the tide to stem,
When suddenly a star arose,
It was the star of Bethlehem.

It was my guide, my light, my all,
It bade my dark forebodings cease;
And thro' the storm of danger's thrall
It led me to the port of peace.

Now safely moor'd—my perils o'er,
I'll sing, first in night's diadem,
For ever and for ever more,
The star!—the star of Bethlehem.

The bias and inclination of his mind began at this early period to be disclosed; preachers and preaching seemed to occupy all his thoughts, and often he would exercise himself in addressing such domestic congregations as may be supposed to constitute the usual auditories of an infant. Thus in his earliest childhood he displayed his fond attachment to the Christian ministry, and the first efforts of his infant mind were directed to that sublime and dignified profession, in which the capacities of his maturer age were so brilliantly displayed. These infantine compositions were not unfrequently entirely his own; and when they claimed not the merit of originality, they were derived from hints collected from what he had heard or read. But his *Preaching exhibitions* could not long be confined to the narrow circle and scanty congregation his father's house supplied; tidings of his early *pulpit talents* soon circulated through the neighborhood; many were anxious to listen to the instructions of this extraordinary child; and most regarded him, as he himself expresses it, "*a parson in embryo.*"

At this age also he wrote verses. He seems however, to have had but a mean opinion of his talent for poetry. It certainly was not the art in which he most excelled. Though an individual may have a power of rhyming sufficient for throwing his feelings into tolerable easy verse, yet something more than this is required in a production which, under the dignified title of a poem, is to meet the public eye. And while most men of an enlightened mind and cultivated taste, have solicited the muses' aid for purposes of private instruction and amusement, and the domestic and social circle have been privileged to share in both, yet it is not necessary to the perfection of the pulpit orator, that he should be an exquisite poet, nor is it at all a detraction from the greatness of his character, that the world should hesitate to pronounce unqualified praise upon poetical effusions, on which the eye or the ear of friendship might linger with delight.

These observations will serve to account for the circumstance, that none of Mr. Spencer's poetical productions are preserved in these pages. And while some partial friends, who saw with pleasure the pieces which circulated in private, may regret for the moment their entire exclusion here, his biographer hopes, that he shall render a more essential service to the memory of his departed friend, by occupying their place with extracts from his papers of a more solid and interesting kind.

These early displays of talent however introduced him to the notice and friendship of some individuals of wealth and consequence. This was doubtless considered by himself and his fond parent as no inconsiderable circumstance in the history and prospects of a child, who, if he rose into eminence at all, could have no facilities afforded him, by the auspicious omens of his birth, or the rank of his father's family. But alas! the fond anticipations which from this quarter he cherished, and perhaps with some degree of reason, were not all realized, to the full extent to which his sanguine mind had urged them. It was doubtless well for him, however, that they were not. The disappointments of childhood will give a sober cast to the else too glowing pictures and too anxious hopes of youth; and while they excite a caution in respect to the confidence we should place in the prospects that unfold themselves before us, admirably prepare the mind for the event, when the pledges of friendship lie long unredeemed, and the fair blossoms of hope are blasted and destroyed.

In the mean time he applied himself with surprising diligence to the acquisition of knowledge. In his favorite pursuit he met with the most important aid, from the valuable friendship of the late Rev. Ebenezer White, then the pastor of the Independent church, at Hertford. For this amiable and pious man, so early lost to the church of Christ,* Mr. Spencer ever cherished and expressed the warmest affection; whilst he survived but a few weeks the melancholy pleasure of paying the last tribute of respect to his beloved remains, and giving utterance to the warm and authorized feelings of his heart, in a most impressive oration at his grave. From Mr. White he learned the rudiments of the Latin tongue; and though the early removal of that gentleman to Chester deprived him of his kind and valuable assistance, yet his father, who had discernment to perceive, and wisdom to foster the unfolding talents of his son, afforded him the means of more ample instruction, by sending him to the best school his native town supplied. Approbation cannot be expressed in language too unqualified of the conduct, in this respect, pursued by the parents of this amiable youth, who though surrounded by every circumstance of a worldly nature to check its progress, yet nobly determined to afford every degree of culture, which such sacrifices as they might be able to make would yield to a mind which promised to rise superior to the obscurity of its birth, and consecrate at some future period no common share of genius to the noblest and the best of causes. Nor must these expressions pass unmingled by regret, that many important accessions are lost to the interests of religion and literature by the neglect of *ignorant*, or the reluctance of *sordid* parents, who in the one case have not the capacity to discover talent, or in the other a disposition, where their worldly circumstances are narrow and scanty, to make any sacrifice of ease on their part, or expect-

* Mr. White died Sunday, May 5th, 1811. An interesting memoir of his life (together with his select remains) has been published by the Reverend Joseph Fletcher, A. M. of Blackburn; with a recommendatory preface, by the Rev. Dr. Collyer, of London. In the melancholy but pleasing task of selecting these papers for the press, Mr. Fletcher was originally joined by the subject of these memoirs:—but whilst Mr. Spencer was thus engaged in rearing a monument to the memory of his departed friend—he too was suddenly removed, and it devolved upon the hand of friendship to perform the same office for himself.

ed emolument on that of the child, for its cultivation

> Full many a gem of purest ray serene,
> The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear;
> Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
> And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

At about the age of twelve years, Mr. Spencer considers himself to have become the subject of serious impressions of a deep and permanent kind, and to have felt something experimentally of the power of religion. This most interesting circumstance he simply states in the memoir of his life before referred to, but mentions no particulars respecting the mode in which these impressions were wrought upon his mind, or in what way they operated upon his character, his conduct, and his views. The *general* effect, however, he distinctly records to have been that of heightening his desire of the Christian ministry, for which, it was strongly impressed upon his mind, God had destined him; whilst it reconciled him to his present situation, which was most uncongenial to the bias of his mind, and most unfriendly to the accomplishment of his ardent wishes; for the circumstances of his father's family were at that time of such a nature as to render his assistance necessary between the hours of school, and at length compelled his parent, however reluctantly, entirely to remove him. His removal from school, however, was not in consequence of his father's having abandoned the prospect of his one day entering on the work of the ministry, but an act dictated by prudence, which afforded him an opportunity patiently to wait, and calmly to watch the leadings of Providence, and the occurrence of any circumstances which might tend to fix the future destiny of his son. These prudential arrangements, however, were a source of keenest anguish to the mind of Spencer. He bowed at first with reluctance to the yoke of manual labor when but partially imposed—rapidly performed the appointed task, and leaped with joy from toils so repugnant to the elevated and ardent desires of his soul, to solitude and to books; and when compelled entirely to leave his school and pursue from day to day the *twisting of worsted*, which he calls *the worst part of his father's business*, his grief was poignant and his regret severe. But religion in early life, assumed in him her mildest and most amiable forms. Its characters were those of uncomplaining acquiescence in the will of God, and cheerful resignation to his earthly lot. If, indeed, with patient submission to the arrangements of Providence he occasionally mingled a warm expression of desire, and suffered his imagination to dwell upon the bright visions of better days, and the animating promise of pursuits more congenial to the tone and inclination of his mind, which hope would give, till, for a moment, it seemed reluctant to return;—it was natural;—nor is it incompatible with the most perfect resignation to the divine will thus to dwell on scenes of promised pleasure with delight. Such a combination of light and shade is beautiful in nature; and not unfrequently in the history of a Christian's feelings does the sunshine of resignation break in upon the tears of sorrow, and produce a commixture of indefinable feelings, which, like the bow of heaven, are a pledge not unredeemed, of fairer scenery and happier days.

The writer, in thus recording the mingled feelings of his friend, has participated too deeply in circumstances and emotions similar to his, not to do it with the warmth of sympathy. He knows how hard it is to give a cheerful and undivided attention to one pursuit, though less repugnant than mechanical employ, when the heart is intently fixed upon another. Ill does the mind adapt itself to the narrow rules of business, the drudgery of manual labor, or the habits of commerce, when panting after study, devoted to the love of books, or eager to engage in the noblest work that can occupy the powers of man—the ministry of the gospel:—impressed with a consciousness, that if it is the will of God that the desire enkindled and cherished in the bosom should be fulfilled, some event will transpire to afford facilities and point the way—but day after day expecting that event in vain, till *hope deferred makes the heart sick*, and all the visions with which she has charmed, seem gradually yielding to the influence of despair. Yet even here, religion has a power to sooth; she sheds the mild influence of resignation, when the glare of hope is gone—

> "Gives even affliction a grace,
> And reconciles man to his lot."

He continued working at his father's business and in his father's house, for about a year and a half, anxiously expecting some situation to present itself more congenial to his wishes, but no circumstance arose to interrupt the monotonous sameness of his every day's employ. It seems, however, that he still attended to the cultivation of his mind, and never wholly lost sight of the Christian ministry. Meanwhile business languished, and his father was desirous of seeing him comfortably settled. Their mutual anxiety increasing to impatience, and his father reading on the cover of a magazine an advertisement for a situation which appeared to be suitable, they set out for London, but upon an interview with the advertiser they found insuperable difficulties in the way, and returned, with disappointment, to Hertford.

Some weeks after this fruitless journey, Mr. Spencer was recommended by a friend to place his son with Messrs. Windwood and Thodey, respectable glovers in the Poultry, who also introduced him to Mr. Thodey's notice. The first interview between the parties was satisfactory; every arrangement was made preparatory to his being bound apprentice, and Thomas soon after entered, in a new capacity, this worthy gentleman's house. The services connected with his new situation, the *better* part of which was far from grateful to the wishes of his heart, still panting for the ministry with unconquerable attachment, were some of them such as his spirit, at first, but reluctantly submitted to perform; yet aware that then the providence of God pointed out no other path, he cheerfully acquiesced and exchanged, not without regret, the calm and tranquil enjoyments of an endeared domestic circle, for the bosom of strangers, the drudgery of a shop, and the bustle of the Poultry. But here, as formerly at school, his amiable manners—his modest behavior, and engaging appearance, soon won the affection of the family, (which was large,) whilst his fervent piety and superior talents, excited emotions of a higher order. An extract of a letter, obligingly addressed to me from Mr. Thodey himself, will best record his manner of life, whilst under that gentleman's roof.

"His appearance, his genuine modesty, diligence, and integrity, created an interest in our hearts, so as it were almost to identify him as one of our own children; he shared our privileges; united with us in family devotion; and I occasionally took the same opportunities of conversing with him on divine things, which I had been accustomed to do with all those under my care. I well recollect one Sabbath evening, being thus engaged with him alone, when from his pertinent replies to some questions I put to him about the concerns of his soul and the importance of an interest in the Saviour, I perceived he possessed an uncommon share of ta-

lent and intellect. This conversation gave me an impressive idea of his general knowledge of the doctrines of the gospel, and I saw in him the traits of a very strong and ardent mind."

Whilst at Mr. Thodey's he conscientiously devoted himself to promote the interests of his employers, notwithstanding his natural aversion to business. He even became peculiarly attached to the family, and receiving from them tokens of affectionate attention, superior to any thing he had a right to expect, and of which he always spoke with gratitude, he became as happy as the circumstances of his lot could possibly allow him to be. He formed an acquaintance with several pious young men, who, though rather above his station, did not hesitate to respect genius and religion, even in a lad of inferior rank in life. Several times also, he exercised his preaching talents at the house of a relation of the young man who was then his fellow-servant, but was afterwards a student in the same academy with himself, and is now a useful minister of the gospel.*

He describes the exercises of his mind and the mode in which he passed his time, during his residence in the Poultry, with great simplicity and feeling.

"At this place my time was entirely employed, as it was fit it should be, in executing the will of my two masters; for the young man, who was active and friendly, I formed a great attachment, and was indeed interested in the welfare of the whole family. Marks of respect were shown me, which were I believe unusual to any of my predecessors. I made myself upon the whole tolerably comfortable; some difficulties and disagreeable circumstances of course fell to my lot, yet upon the whole I had many enjoyments. My acquaintance, whilst here, increased: with several young men, who indeed were rather above my station in life, I was particularly intimate, and more than twice or thrice did I give an exhortation at the house of a relative of the young man's, who was my fellow-servant. The opportunities I had of hearing the word were very delightful, and a higher relish was given to them by the toils and business of the week."†

To youth who may be placed in similar circumstances with the amiable subject of these memoirs, his mild and cheerful deportment in scenes so uncongenial to the bias of his mind, should prove a salutary and impressive lesson. Impatience and fretfulness are but ill adapted to the furtherance of any design, and a disposition to murmur, under the arrangements of our present lot, marks a state of mind most unfriendly to the patient sufferance of the toils, the anxieties and the disappointments inseparably connected with the ministerial life; and whilst it is an obvious fact, that every young man possessed of piety cannot be employed as a preacher of the gospel, to such as conceive themselves endowed with talents for that solemn office, and yet are placed in circumstances which seem to forbid the indulgence of a hope they still cherish with an anxious pleasure; to such, the subsequent history of Mr. Spencer, will afford another striking proof in an innumerable series—that where God has actually called and qualified an individual for the ministry, he will, in his own time and by unexpected methods, make the path of duty plain before that individual's feet. Let no one, then, rashly attempt to break the connected chain of opposing circumstances by which his providence may have surrounded him; but rather wait in patience till the hand that has thus encircled him opens up a passage, and by events, which may justly be considered as intimations of the divine will, invites him to advance.

These remarks, the result of frequent observations on the ways of God in cases similar to this, not improperly connect the future scenes of Mr. Spencer's life, with those we have already contemplated. For the time was now arrived, that the cloud which had hovered over his future prospects should be dissipated, and another path—a path to which he had from infancy directed his attention with fond anticipation and intense desire—present its varied and momentous objects of pursuit for the cheerful, but, alas! the short-lived exercise of his superior powers. After a residence of about four months with his employers in the Poultry, circumstances occurred of such a nature as to render his services no longer necessary, on which account he left London and returned for a while to his parents at Hertford; but some time previous to the event which caused his departure from London, he had been introduced to the notice of Thomas Wilson, Esq., the benevolent and indefatigable treasurer of the academy for educating young men for the work of the ministry, at Hoxton. Mr. Wilson perceived in him piety and talents far above his years. His whole appearance and his engaging manners excited in that gentleman's breast, an interest in this amiable youth, which he never lost, and he gave it as his decided opinion, (without elating him with a hope, of the ultimate failure of which, there was still a probability,) that his views should in some way or other be directed towards the ministry.

This revolution in Mr. Spencer's affairs was not unnoticed or unimproved by Mr. Wilson, who wisely regarding it as a favorable opportunity for carrying into effect those generous designs respecting him, which from their first interview he had cherished, sent for him; conversed with him upon the subject, and introduced him to the Rev. William Hordle, of Harwich, a gentleman to whose care some of the young men were committed, whose youth or other circumstances did not allow of their immediate entrance into the academy, though they were considered as proper objects of its patronage. To this gentleman, at length, Mr. Wilson proposed to send Mr. Spencer for trial of his talents and piety, and for preparatory studies; a proposition to which Mr. Spencer acceded with unfeigned gratitude and joy. The time fixed for his entrance into Mr. Hordle's family was January, 1806. The interval between this period and that of his departure from the Poultry, which was in October, 1805, he spent in his father's house, and for the most part in his father's business. Though this was repugnant to his feelings, he had yet learned, by five month's absence, in the bustle of a shop in the city, to appreciate the calm and tranquil pleasures of a domestic circle, to which he became more endeared as the lovely qualities of his mind unfolded, and the dignified and pleasing prospects of his future life were disclosed. But though considerable light was thrown upon his destiny, yet on leaving London it was not finally determined; and this pressed with peculiar weight upon his spirit, which, susceptible of the slightest emotion, must have deeply felt in leaving one scene of action, the uncertainty which as yet partially veiled from him that which should succeed. Of the day of his departure he thus writes:—"I anticipated it with mingled emotions; a strong desire to see my father, mother, brother, and sisters, a sensation of sorrow at parting with my old friends, and the idea of uncertainty

* The Rev. Thomas Heward, of Clare, to whom I cheerfully take this opportunity of publicly rendering my thanks for several interesting letters of Mr. Spencer's, which will appear in these pages.

† MS. Memoirs.

as to my future engagements in life, equally affected me. Although I had been absent from home but five months, the desire I had again to see Hertford was very great, nor do I suppose I shall often spend more pleasant evenings than the first one I spent at home, after the first time of being absent for any considerable season; two or three days were spent in seeing other relations and friends, till—."*

Here the narrative, first referred to, and often quoted, written by his own hand, and evidently for his own use, abruptly closes; and here for a moment his biographer will pause.——It is a charming domestic piece, which the hand of his departed friend, obedient to the warm and vivid recollections of his fervent mind, has sketched; but scarcely has he pictured to himself the countenances of that interesting group which gathered around him again to bid him welcome to his father's house, and committed the rude outline to his paper, than he is suddenly called off, and lays down the recording pen for ever! So did his life abruptly terminate; but the mysterious voice that summoned him from his endeared connections upon earth introduced his emancipated spirit to the bosom of a happier family above—not another family, but one most intimately connected with his own, for which whilst here he cherished such a warm affection. The sentiment this sentence breathes was familiar to himself, and often seen in the energy and fervor with which he would repeat these admirable lines of Kelly:—

One family, we dwell in him;
One church above, beneath,
Though now divided by the stream,
The narrow stream of death.

One army of the living God,
To his command we bow;
Part of the host have cross'd the flood,
And part are crossing now.

Ten thousand to their endless home
This awful moment fly:
And we are to the margin come,
And soon expect to die.

Dear Jesus, be our constant guide;
Then when the word is giv'n,
Bid death's cold stream and flood divide
And land us safe in heav'n.

At Harwich Mr. Spencer was completely in his element. He commenced the year 1806 in Mr. Hordle's family, and was then about completing the fifteenth of his own life. At this interesting age, when the powers of the mind begin rapidly to unfold—when a tone is often given to the future cast of thought, and sentiments and habits are imbibed and formed, which constitute the basis or become the germ of the matured and finished character;—it was a circumstance peculiarly auspicious in the history of this lamented youth, that he was introduced to the pious and enlightened care of such a man as Mr. Hordle. In his preaching, in his lectures, and in his conversation, he saw most admirably applied, those elementary principles of theological science, the scholastic forms of which must else have been unintelligible or insipid to his mind. In the liberal and sacred current of his habitual thought, Mr. Spencer would find a safe channel for the yet infant stream of his own conceptions; whilst he would imperceptibly form his character upon that mild, correct, and amiable model, constantly before him.

* MS. Memoirs.

It must be of incalculable advantage to a young man destined for the Christian ministry, as it evidently was to our departed Spencer, to pass a year or two beneath a faithful and enlightened pastor's roof—to be a spectator of his toil—a daily witness of the varied scenes of duty and of trial which the Christian ministry perpetually presents. It is true, that in academies, lectures on the pastoral care are read, and discourses on the duties of the Christian ministry delivered; but one week of actual observation must impress more deeply on the mind all that such lectures can contain, and unnumbered other circumstances, equally important, but which no general analysis can include, than months or years of the most devoted study. And to the diligent improvement of this peculiar advantage, perhaps, may in part be attributed that early maturity at which Mr. Spencer's capacity for the sacred office had arrived. He had the seriousness, the reflection of the *pastor* while but a *student;* and when he actually entered on that holy office, the exercises of the pulpit, and the habits of his ministerial life, bespoke the knowledge of long experience, rather than of recent theory, and indicated the presence of a *master's*, not a *learner's* hand.

At Harwich his diligence was exemplary: a judicious course of reading was marked out for him by his respected tutor, which he conscientiously and unwearyedly pursued; but besides this, he had the use of an excellent library, with rich supplies from which he amply occupied his leisure hours. He had made considerable progress in the Latin; and soon after his introduction to Mr. Hordle, he commenced, under his direction, the study of the Hebrew. With this sacred language he was particularly pleased, and soon demonstrated his attachment and his diligence, by completing, with considerable labor, an abridgment of Parkhurst's Hebrew Lexicon. This work he accomplished in a small pocket manual, which proved of considerable use to him, and was almost his constant companion.*

Here, too, he first became acquainted with the principles of Moral Philosophy; and whilst from the lectures of Doddridge, and the essays of Locke, his mind derived vigor and energy; from the study of the Latin poets, and the classic authors of our own country, it gained amusement, and his compositions gradually assumed an air of elegance and ease.

But not only in literature and science was his progress conspicuous during his residence at Harwich; but he also made considerable advances in the knowledge and experience of divine things. That in the midst of all his studies, which yet he pursued with diligence and ardor, religion was the object of his chief regard and dearest to his heart, is evident from the uniform strain of his letters to his most intimate and beloved friend Mr. Heward, whose fellow laborer he had been at Mr. Thodey's, and the privation of whose society he seemed deeply to deplore. His views of the Christian ministry became more and more consistent, and the impression of its vast importance more deep and solemn on his mind. The intense desire with which he panted for that sacred and honorable office became tempered, though never checked, by an awe of its vast responsibility, and a consciousness of incapacity for the full discharge of its numerous and laborious duties.

With Mr. Hordle he would sometimes indulge

* Of this manual he made two fair copies, one of which is in possession of his tutor, and the other is amongst the papers from which these Memoirs are supplied. The design is honorable to his judgment, and the execution to his perseverance and his accuracy at that early age.

in the most free and unreserved converse on the state of his heart, and his private walk with God. In such conversations he was always much affected, and susceptible, from the constitution of his nature, of the most delicate impressions and the keenest feelings, it may be well supposed that in religion he would *deeply* feel. Hence the tenderness of his conscience, and the susceptibility of his mind, would often overwhelm his bosom with convictions of guilt, and agitate him with unnumbered inward conflicts. Yet in the midst of all he evidently grew in spiritual strength—his mind acquired confidence—his principles became daily more and more confirmed—and he had advanced far in a deep and experimental acquaintance with the ways of God at an age when such advancement is rarely to be found.

Whilst at Harwich he regularly shared with Mr. H. the pleasing duty of conducting the devotions of the family, and frequently performed the sacred service with an enlargement of heart, a fervor and propriety of expression truly astonishing. But this was a circumstance he particularly wished should be concealed; his modesty and diffidence shrunk from the observation of men, even of his nearest friends; and in one of his letters to his friend* he writes, "My situation is comfortable, more so than ever; I am considered like one of the family; of an evening I generally, by Mr. H.'s desire, engage in family prayer, he in the morning. *O tell it to no body on any account.* When he is out I always do."

To those who knew not the beloved original, the outlines of whose character these pages but imperfectly present, the detail of minute particulars may be uninteresting and insipid; but those who were familiar with him will dwell with pleasure on the faintest lineament that may be here preserved of a dear departed friend, so ardently, so deservedly esteemed; whilst a combination of these varied and retired beauties may form a portrait on which the eye of a stranger may dwell with admiration, and the mind reflect with profit. It is in confidence of this that his biographer pauses to record another and a pleasing trait in his character at this early age—the peculiar warmth and constancy of his friendship. He seems, indeed, at this period to have had but one bosom friend, except those of his own immediate family; to him his letters breathe an affection the most glowing, spiritual, and pure; and perhaps no little incident more strikingly displays the tender cast of his mind than that which he himself relates, with great simplicity, in a letter to his friend:—

"This morning we read (Mr. H. and myself) the second night of Young's Night Thoughts—the very place that treats of friendship; I was rather affected at the reading of it; and after it was finished, and we were alone, I told him (Mr. H.) I was no stranger to Young's sentiments in that place. He asked me 'If I had lost any friends?' I told him no—not by death. He asked me 'if I had by treachery?' O no, sir. 'How then?' *Only by separation!*"

Thus in pleasant and familiar intercourse with one for whom he mingled veneration with affection, and of whom he never ceased to speak with all the rapturous energy of gratitude and filial love—in exercises and pursuits every way adapted to satisfy his ardent thirst of knowledge—in scenes and in society congenial to the tone and bias of his mind—in conscientious preparation for closer studies and severer labor, previous to his entrance on that sacred office long the object of his choice—and in deep communion with himself and God—did he pass the allotted period of his stay at Harwich.

As the term (a year) fixed for his residence with Mr. Hordle drew towards its close, his anxiety considerably increased; he anticipated, with regret, a departure from scenes and society so much endeared to him; and the trial through which he was to pass previous to his admission into the academy at Hoxton, when viewed in connection with his youth, excited in his mind considerable apprehension and dread. But the hope of success never entirely abandoned him; whilst the pleasing prospect of being again associated with his friend, who had by this time entered as a student in the same academy, tended not a little to gladden and animate his heart.

In November he drew up a statement of his religious experience, his views of theological truth, and his reasons for desiring the Christian ministry, according to a standing order of the academy with respect to young men proposing themselves as candidates for its patronage. These papers, written in a style of dignified simplicity, and disclosing a knowledge and experience of divine things, which in a youth, scarcely sixteen years of age, must have excited the admiration of all to whom they were submitted—were duly presented to the committee, and passed, though not without some difficulty, arising from his age; but the extraordinary qualifications he appeared to possess, and the strong recommendations of his friend and tutor, Mr. Hordle, overcame this obstacle, and the 5th of January following was appointed for his personal appearance before the constituents of that institution, in order to give them a specimen of his talents for public speaking.

Mr. Spencer left Mr. Hordle's family on the 18th of December, and spent the interval of time between his departure from Harwich and the day of his examination at Hoxton (which was postponed to the 7th of January) at his father's house at Hertford.

Whose imagination does not follow this beloved youth into the bosom of his family again; who does not picture to himself the charming scenes of social and domestic joy his presence would inspire. With what tenderness and affection would his venerable father bid him welcome to his paternal home again; with what delight would he gaze upon the animated features of his countenance, smiling in all the ingenuousness of youth; while with nobler feelings of delight he marked the unfolding graces of his mind, saw his improvement in the best of sciences—religion, and beheld him daily growing in favor both with God and man. With what adoring gratitude would they retrace together the scenes of his childhood, and the many alarming obstacles which once almost forbade the indulgence of a hope that the object of their ardent wish would ever be obtained; and how, in the transport of those happy hours, would his family anticipate for him they loved, in the future stages of an honorable ministry, years of usefulness and comfort. Ah! pleasing visions never to be realized! Little did that interesting group conceive that it was his appointed lot but just to taste the joys and sorrows of a pastor's life, and then expire. Already they had seen the bud swelling with fulness—teeming with life; now they beheld the blossom, and admired its beauty; and they thought long to gaze upon the promised charms of the unfolded flower; happy strangers of the melancholy and mysterious fact, that so soon as it had opened it must be suddenly cut down and die! But such and so frail is man—"*In the morning they are like grass that groweth up, in the evening it is cut down and withereth.*" Psalm xc. 5, 6. Such and so uncertain is human life—"*It is even as a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.*" James iv. 14.

At this interesting period of Mr. Spencer's life it will be perhaps gratifying to the reader to pause, and gain a more familiar acquaintance with him

* Mr. Heward.

than can be supplied by a narration of events and circumstances in his history, by perusing some extracts from his correspondence and other papers, which will throw much light upon the formation of his character, and afford a pleasing specimen of his early genius.

I have now before me a packet of letters addressed to his friend Mr. Heward, dated at various periods, from October, 1805, to December, 1806. Though at the commencement of this correspondence he had not attained his fifteenth year, these letters breathe a spirit of the purest piety, and often express sentiments by which age would not be dishonored, in a style remarkably correct and vigorous. But the reader shall participate with me in the pleasure which the perusal of this interesting correspondence—this simple and unaffected utterance of early piety and friendship, has afforded me.

I.

Hertford, Oct. 16, 1805.

"——— As for the manner in which I have and do employ my time: my father employs me either in writing or in his business, more than I expected. What leisure time I do have, which is but little, I employ in reading, writing, and meditation. I hope he will not press upon me that employment which I dislike, but which however I have been engaged in.

"Mr. Wilson wrote a letter to my father, the substance of which is as follows: he informs him that if it is possible he will get a minister to take me, in order to see more of my piety and talents; and hopes that it will be agreeable for me to be at home with my father till Christmas.

"These are the circumstances under which I am now placed. I know it is my duty to be submissive and resigned to the will of God, but this is a lesson which, like all others, is to be learned at the cross of Christ: 'tis there alone, my dear friend, we can study all heavenly graces and duties ———."

It is pleasing to observe with what deep seriousness of mind he conducted those favorite exercises in exhortation and in preaching, before referred to,* and with what humility and even thankfulness he listened to the animadversions of any who were disposed to criticise. In another part of the same letter he says: "——— I am not without hope, that I shall praise and adore a blessed God, for the ill opinions those persons formed of me, who heard me preach at Mr. T——'s. Methinks I cannot be thankful enough to you of informing me of it. It has, I trust, made me more watchful and prayerful than before, that I may be accounted righteous not in the sight of men, but in the view of a sin-avenging God. Thus we may see a little of the dealings of Providence with his children. When he distresses them in any way he does it for their good. *All things*, saith the inspired apostle, *work together for good to them that love God, and are the called according to his purpose.* Since that evening I have felt a little more comfort in my own mind respecting eternal things. God forbid it should be a false peace. Hope you keep close to a throne of grace in personal prayer. 'Tis from thence we are to draw all our comfort; 'tis there we can get a soul-transforming spiritual view of Jesus; 'tis from thence we get every necessary weapon, wherewith to combat our spiritual enemies.

"So often called away to attend to different things, like you, I cannot say I have written such a letter as I could wish. If I should be placed under a minister, I think I should have more opportunity for writing long letters. However, let us, whenever an opportunity offers, write to each other. Such love as ours is not easily quenched. Let us then manifest it by writing to each other, so as to stir up one another to the exercise of every Christian grace. Still let us keep our eye upon the Lord Jesus Christ, and be constantly concerned to honor his holy name, by a consistent walk and conversation. Then shall we meet to part no more, and dwell for ever with our Jesus, in upper, better, brighter worlds.

"The soul that on Jesus has lean'd for repose,
He will not, he cannot, desert to his foes:
That soul tho' all hell should endeavor to shake,
He'll *never, no never, no never* forsake."

Soon after it was determined that he should go to Harwich for a twelvemonth, he wrote again to his friend Mr. Heward, and the following extract from his letter, shows the humble, grateful, and devotional habit of his mind:—

II.

Hertford, November 12, 1805.

"——— I join with you in saying, 'how wonderful are God's ways.' We indeed little thought that Mr. H. was the person under whom I should be instructed, when we were at Hoxton, hearing him preach, or I, when I breakfasted with him: at the same time, I cannot forbear adoring that favor which is shown to me from God; ME who am utterly unworthy of the least of all God's mercies. Goodness and mercy have hitherto followed me, and, I doubt not, will through life. May that goodness which was so gloriously displayed in the salvation of sinners, and that mercy which has snatched so many brands from the burning, be our consolation all through life—our joy in death—and the burden of our song to all eternity."

The following observations are worthy of a much older pen, and display a judgment and discretion, rather unusual in a lad, not yet fifteen years of age.

III.

November 13.

"You informed me in your last, that your desires for the work of the ministry had not at all abated. I sincerely wish that they may be fulfilled, and that you and I may be fellow laborers in the Lord's vineyard. God certainly can do this for us; let us pray that he may. You still appear dubious of your own ability for that important work. I would have you consider, that God works by whom he will work He has many ministers in his church, real sent ministers, who have not those great gifts that distinguish many of his servants; and not only so, but these men have often been the means of doing more good than those of great talents—and what is the reason of this? *Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight*—is all that we must say. And you, my worthy friend, should also remember, that as yet, you cannot form any idea of your own abilities. As I have often told you, when I lived with you, I doubt not your abilities, when improved by application to study, &c. will be as fit for that employ, (if the will of God) as any other. God, you know, in every thing acts as a sovereign: '*I will work, and who shall let it,*' is his language—will work by the feeblest means, and the weakest instruments. I hope you will still be kept low in your own eyes, for, that, I am sure, is one quality, or rather property, of a gospel minister. At our best estate we are altogether vanity, and less than nothing. May the Lord keep us all truly humble. Luther used to say, there were three things made a minister—affliction, meditation, and prayer: that is, sanctified affliction, scriptural meditation and earnest prayer; in which last particu-

* See page 198.

lar I hope you are perpetually engaged. Pray, my dear friend, for direction of God—pray for grace, which is of more value, by far, than great gifts, and say in the language of resignation, hope, and faith—*Here am I, Lord, send me to labor in thy vineyard.*' You have appealed to me in saying, 'You well know I shall never rely on my own strength for success and usefulness'—I know you will not, (at least whilst in your present mind) and I pray that God would keep you still so determined. Let us then pray, that we may both of us be able, useful, and humble ministers of the New Testament.

"——— I am glad to find, that you generally hear three times a day. Young men, who wish to be ministers, cannot hear too much of the gospel, provided they are anxious to improve on what they do hear———."

I shall present the reader with nearly the whole of the following letter; and I think, that few will be found, on the perusal, who deem it unworthy of preservation. It contains a pleasing, grateful (and the more pleasing as it is entirely uninfluenced) tribute to the memory of departed worth—discloses the deep attention and care with which its writer was, at that early age, accustomed to hear and reflect upon sermons, and shows how incessant and uniform was the panting of his heart for the Christian ministry.

IV.

Hertford, November 18, 1805.

"My dearest friend—I expected to have heard from you before now, but as I have not, it becomes me to bear the disappointment with fortitude and resolution, hoping that it will not be long before I have a few lines from you. On Saturday last, I heard that that good and worthy man Mr. Winwood was dead. It will, I doubt not, be a great stroke to the family; but I am well assured, that to him death was eternal gain. Truly, *the righteous hath hope in his death.* May you and I both be found at the last day on the right hand of the Judge with our respected master! While he is tuning his harp to the praises of a precious Jesus, we have to combat with many enemies; we have many trials to pass under

Before we reach the heavenly fields,
Or walk the golden streets!*

We shall, I am persuaded, feel our own depravity in many instances here below, ere we join with him in everlasting songs above; but if we are enlisted under the banners—the blood-stained banners of the cross, we shall certainly arrive there. Let us then seek, earnestly seek, after the one thing needful; and whilst earthly objects vanish and decay in our estimation; nay, whilst the world dies daily in our view, and its perishing things appear in their proper light—may we feel our hearts panting after the wells of salvation—our souls, with all their faculties, engaged in the noblest of all undertakings—our feet running in the good ways of God—our tongues making mention of his righteousness, and of his only—in short, may we be crucified to the world—risen with Christ—and transformed into his divine image and likeness. This, I trust, I can say is my desire, and I know it is the earnest wish of my dear friend.

"Sabbath-day, Nov. 15th, I heard Mr. M———, at Cowbridge, in the morning, from I Thes. v. 8. '*But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and for an helmet the hope of salvation.*' He first showed what was implied in Christians being of the day; secondly, enforced the exhortation of the text. To be of the day, he said, implied—1. a state of knowledge; 2. safety; 3. comfort, &c. In enforcing the admonition, he exhorted them to the exercise of faith and love; gave them good grounds for hope; and showed that these three graces had a tendency to comfort and strengthen believers. In the afternoon, from Acts xvii. 30, 31. '*The times of this ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth all men every where to repent, because he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead!*' He considered—1. the certainty of a future judgment; 2. the person of the judge; 3. the circumstances of the day; 4. the necessity of repentance inferred from the text. He, indeed, is a worthy man, and appears well suited for a missionary. In the evening I heard Mr. L———, at the Chapel, from John iii. 14. '*For as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness,*' &c. He said many good things, and is very earnest in the good cause. Last Lord's day we had Mr. M——— again; text in the morning, Heb. vi. 11. '*And we desire, that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end.*' He considered—1. the thing mentioned—the full assurance of hope; 2. showed that it might be attained; 3. exhorted them to diligence in aspiring after it. Time and room forbid me to make any remarks upon the sermon (which was a good one) in the afternoon, from Acts xvi. 9. '*And then stood a man of Macedonia and prayed him, saying come over and help us.*' In discoursing on it, he showed—1. that the heathens want help; 2. that it is the duty of ministers and people to give it them; and 3. that men should exert themselves for the purpose. It appeared like a collection sermon; and he went afterwards and got a little money of a few friends at Hertford, for the mission to China.

"In the evening, having been previously invited, I went at six o'clock to Mr. K———'s, to see the minister. I was there during family worship; and after that, Mr. M. and self went up stairs to talk a little together. He asked me about my learning, &c., then how long I had been seriously disposed, &c. He appeared satisfied with my answers, and asked me if I was not going into the country; I told him 'yes.' He asked me if I should have an opportunity of attending to my books there. This naturally led to the whole affair: he seemed glad, and asked me if I designed to be a minister in this country. I told him I wished to be quite resigned to the will of Providence in that matter. He gave me some good advice; and then we knelt down, and he engaged in a short and affectionate prayer. I was much affected with the advice, conversation, and prayer.

"———I am sensible that your attachment to me is as unshaken as ever. I hope you pray that both of us may be made ministers of the gospel; and in some future day, have our wishes respecting that completely fulfilled. I am very desirous that you may be shortly placed in a situation in which you will have more leisure for reading, writing, studying, &c. *O that you were going with me to Harwich.* Still continue to pray for one who feels his own unworthiness for the service of his God, and yet wishes to be an instrument of doing great good to souls: and if I should not be very successful in my ministry, methinks it would be reward

* Alas! lamented youth! little did he, or the friend to whom he wrote, imagine how few his trials—how short his warfare should prove—and how soon the pious desire of his heart should be, as it respected himself, fulfilled: such and so mysterious are the ways of God—Spencer is early summoned to his rest, but his companion is left, still to maintain the conflict, whilst he mourns his loss—"*two men shall be in the field, the one shall be taken and the other left.*" Matthew xxiv. 40.

enough to have labored for God, and not to have been employed in the drudgery of Satan."

The next letter, to the same correspondent, contains a specimen of his talent for the composition of sermons at that age. It affords a pleasing proof of his early skill in the practice of an art, in which he eventually so much excelled.

V.

Hertford, December 3, 1805.

"——I have sent you my thoughts upon (or rather my way of discussing) that text Mr. Knight preached from. I hope your candor will excuse imperfections. I never read any thing upon it, and it is the production of a boy.

MATTHEW v. 20.

'*For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.*'

GENERAL HEADS.

1st.—EXPLAIN THE NATURE OF THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES.

2d.—SHOW IN WHAT RESPECTS OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS MUST EXCEED THEIRS.

3d.—NOTICE THE CONSEQUENCES OF POSSESSING A RIGHTEOUSNESS NO BETTER THAN THEIRS.

1st HEAD.—EXPLAIN THE NATURE, &C.

It was self-righteousness.—Luke xviii. 9.

1st.—*This righteousness is founded in ignorance*
Of God's nature,
Of the spirituality of his law,
Of the deceitfulness of the heart,
And of the true method of salvation.

2d HEAD.—SHOW IN WHAT RESPECTS OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS SHOULD EXCEED THEIRS.

The righteousness here termed 'yours' is the righteousness of Christ, which becomes ours by imputation, in the same manner as our sins became Christ's. This righteousness thus becoming ours, exceeds the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees.

1st.—*In its origin.* It is divine—the other human, or Satanic; as we doubt not, Satan first infused self-righteous thoughts into the minds of men, &c.

2d.—*Its nature and particular properties.*
This righteousness
Delivers us from bondage,
Saves us from sin,
Gives us holiness of life,
Makes us victorious in death,
Joyful in judgment, and
Happy through all eternity.

The righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees cannot do this.

But our Lord might also allude to that righteousness which is implanted in us, as well as that which is imputed to us, and that far exceeds the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees in its effects, which are real good works, which
Spring from a good motive,
Are directed to a good purpose,
And have a good end.

These works are not meritorious, but serve for the justification of our faith, not of our persons, and they far exceed the legal performances of the self-righteous.

3d HEAD.—NOTICE THE CONSEQUENCES OF POSSESSING A RIGHTEOUSNESS NO BETTER THAN THEIRS.

Ye shall in no case enter into, &c.

1st.—Here we must necessarily dwell a little upon *the nature of the kingdom of heaven.*—Consider
1. The person of the King.
2. The happiness of the subjects.
3. The eternal duration of his reign, &c.

2d.—*How dreadful a thing to be shut out of this kingdom.*

3d.—*How peculiarly striking is the language of the Saviour—ye shall in no case, &c.*

Notwithstanding all your professions, long prayers, alms givings, &c., '*Ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.*'

From this subject we draw a few inferences.

1.—We may learn from hence, *the evil nature of sin.* If all *self-righteousness* be so bad, what must *unrighteousness* be?

2.—We here see *the only true method of salvation*—the righteousness of Christ.

3.—How necessary is *daily, serious self-examination*, in order to ascertain to which class we belong.

4.—We likewise infer *the necessity of prayer*, for instruction and grace.

5.—*How dreadful is the case of the self-righteous character.*

6.—*The believer may hence draw some comfort.* He is interested in Jesus Christ, and shall outride all the storms and troubles of life, sing the dear name of Jesus in the hour of death, and stand unmoved amidst the jarring elements, 'the wreck of matter, and the crush of worlds.'

"May the God of hope bless us both—fill us with all joy and peace in believing—enlarge our spiritual coast—give us to see more and more of the sinfulness of our nature—the depravity of our hearts—the imperfection of our graces—the smallness of our knowledge—the sufficiency of Jesus—the stability of our hope—the fulness of Christ. May he give us to see that our names are written in heaven—may he brighten up our evidences for glory—establish our faith—enlarge our desires—and give us hungerings and thirstings after righteousness. May we enjoy the blessings of salvation—the sweetness of communion with God—the peace bought and purchased for us by Christ Jesus—and that joy in the Holy Ghost, produced by his influences—and may we learn more and more of the heights, lengths, depths, and breadths of the love which passeth knowledge. May we dwell together in that happy land, where none but the righteous can enter, and where our worship shall be undisturbed.

"And now, my dear brother, I commend you to the hands of that God who doth all things well, and who taketh care of those who put their trust in him; and hoping soon to hear from you, I subscribe myself,

"Your truly affectionate friend,
"THOMAS SPENCER."

"N. B. Remember me to ——. Pray for me, and may the Lord bless you. Amen."

VI.

Hertford, December 31, 1805.

"MY DEAR FRIEND—I think myself very happy in having such a friend as you prove yourself to be. I know affection towards me is too deeply rooted in you ever to be erased by separation.—Life's greatest blessing is a well chosen friend, and I do feel it so. You cannot imagine (only by your own feelings) what pleasure I take in recollecting past scenes, and recalling to the mind occurrences relating only to us, which never shall be forgotten. I hope we have the same 'friend that sticketh closer than a brother,' I am affected, peculiarly affected, when I read the solemn confessions you make of depravity, &c.—You know Paul acknowledged himself the chief

of sinners. When, therefore, you are bowed down under a sense of sin, *look unto Jesus*, there only salvation is to be found for those who, like you, are sensible of sin. But I verily believe my friend has already been washed in the fountain of his blood. Yes, I doubt not but you have passed from death unto life, and are called according to God's eternal purpose; therefore, instead of writing bitter against yourself, rejoice in Christ Jesus whilst you have no confidence in the flesh. Ah! my friend, you know not fully how I have lifted up my puny arm in rebellion against God; so that I cannot think myself a whit behind the chief of sinners. Young as I am, I am a great sinner; but blessed be God who has, I hope, given us both a good hope through grace: to him be all the glory.

"I shall, I expect, be in town a day sooner than was intended, viz. Wednesday the 8th; my father will not come till the next day. Mr. F———, in his letter, mentions a desire that I would give them a lecture (*in the old way*) at his house in the evening. I am very willing to do it, and I hope we shall have your company."

VII.

Hertford, January 3, 1806.

"My dearest friend—With the greatest pleasure I received and read your kind but short letter; but I must not speak about its shortness, as mine must be as short, if not shorter, as I expect S——— to come for it directly. Mr. Davies's sermon entitled, 'The Midnight Hour,' I understand, is printed. How glad I should have been to have heard it. I hope when I am in town you will remember your promise, and not forget the greatest part of the sermon, as you know how I respect (and like the preaching of) that worthy man.* I hope you will have a pleasant and profitable day next Sabbath at Finchley. I am afraid you cannot get out next Thursday, the day Nelson is buried; for I do assure you that your presence at any place in town would afford me more pleasure than the sight of his funeral, to which I do not intend to go. I have been with Samuel a little about Hertford. I have read what I wanted in Washington's Life, or rather his History of American Wars, as I do not see so much of Washington in it as I expected. I cannot add more; but remain your very affectionate friend,

"Thomas Spencer."

His next letter is from Harwich, and contains a pleasing disclosure of the state of his mind on the accomplishment, so far, of his ardent wishes.

VIII.

Harwich, Feb. 6, 1806.

My dearest friend—I with pleasure embrace the opportunity which now offers itself, of writing you a few lines for the first time since I have been here. While I hope you enjoy your health, I can say I never was better in my life than I have been since I have been at Harwich. The air is very cold and healthy: I am sure I have felt the difference. In the town there are many inhabitants, and a Methodist place besides Mr. Hordle's: by Methodists, I mean Wesley's people. Mr. Hordle preaches three times on a Sabbath day, and is very well attended, and on Wednesday evenings; prayer meeting on Monday night. I doubt not but you will join with me in returning thanks to the all-wise disposer of events for placing me in that comfortable situation which I now fill. I live with Mr. H. entirely; his study is where I pursue my learning, and in an afternoon I meet his boys (there are only nine) at his vestry, to say a lesson or two with them. I learn *Latin, Geography*, and have got a considerable way in Doddridge's Lectures on *Pneumatology*, in which I meet now and then with a *philosophical* subject; indeed, my dear friend, I really am very comfortable. *O! that my improvement may keep pace with the advantages I enjoy.*

"But, my dearest friend, what a separation between us. I often think of you when in this study pursuing my learning; think! did I say? I cannot help thinking of you, and I will cherish every tender thought of a friend I so much love. Ofttimes I think that of an evening, when we are surrounding the family altar, you are engaged in the busy concerns of life—whilst I am enjoying the advantages of a *kind teacher*, a good *library*, and various other blessings, you are behind the counter of a glove shop. Yet do not despair. I hope we shall some future day enjoy one another's company, and these advantages connected with it. When I walk out, as I in general do every day for exercise, I imagine you to be here—I converse with you—I see you—and fancy many other enjoyments, which perhaps will not come so soon. When I last saw you I was exceedingly vexed that we could not have half an hour together in private; but, however, I know you regard me still—and am sure I love you much; and it is some pleasure to think that we can yet pray for one another. O do not forget me, unworthy as I am, in your approaches to the throne of grace. Pray that I may not abuse my privileges; but that whilst I am here it may be manifest that I am possessed of a principle of divine grace in my heart. But I hope I need not mention this to you, for you do, I trust, still remember me in your best moments. I have not forgot the pleasure I experienced the last time I saw you in London, nor the affectionate manner in which you conversed with me from Mr. F.'s to my cousin's the last evening.

"I had a very tedious journey here, as I could not sleep *all night* in the coach. But I think I am well repaid. I did not imagine that I should be treated with such care; I have a nice little bed to myself; and, in short, am surrounded with blessings. I take some pleasure in contrasting my present situation with what it was when at Mr. Thodey's; but after I have considered the peculiar advantages of this to that, I find that there was one pleasure I enjoyed there, which I do not here—that of your company and conversation; and thus is life made up of hopes and fears, pleasures and pains. May we be among those who are *strangers and sojourners* here, who seek a better country.

"The evening I generally employ in promiscuous reading, as the time is then as it were my own. As I come home from the vestry about an hour before the other boys, from that time till tea I am engaged in secret meditation, reading God's word, and prayer to him. Ah! Thomas, you are then more on my mind than during the other parts of the day, for I cannot but remember how often you have pressed on me the duty of private prayer; and indeed, my friend, you are then most remembered by me in the best sense. I do continue to pray for you; and I hope God will hear our petitions for one another, and send us answers of peace. I beg of you, I entreat you to be earnest in supplication for me, that if God has appointed me for the work of the ministry, I may be fitted for it, and have a divine blessing attending me in all I undertake.

"Mr. H. bids me write now and then the heads of a sermon of my own, and show it him. I have yet only done one: it met his approbation.

"Be so kind as to remember me to Mr. F. &c. &c. I suppose you like your business as little as ever; but I hope you will soon be put in a situation

* The Rev. Mr. Davies, of Queen-street, Cheapside, London.

where you will yourself enjoy more—I mean in the best enjoyments. I still hope that we, formed for each other's comfort, shall yet be made blessings to each other, and that in a particular way. Then let the conceited, covetous worldling say, 'Friendship is but a name'—we know it is something more—it is a great blessing; and where the friends have grace in their hearts, it is so eminently and especially. David and Jonathan found it so. I often think of your noticing particularly that expression, *their souls were knit together*. Dr. Young thought so when he said, 'poor is the friendless master of a world.' I am thankful that I have had such a friend cast in my way that will be, I trust, a blessing to me all through life, and that will dwell with me in a better world. May the hope of that happiness stimulate us to more resignation to the divine will, and holy disdain of the vanities of time and sense.

"And now, my dear friend, my letter draws to a close; I can scarcely forbear tears while I write it. I hope you will overlook its very visible imperfections, and remember that it comes from one that loves you. Need I again beseech you to pray for me, that I may find mercy of the Lord, be blessed with every blessing here below, and crowned with glory hereafter.

"Write to me what religious intelligence you know I am ignorant of: I see the Magazine here, and other periodical works.—And now I desire to commit myself, my dear friend, and all our concerns, into the hands of a covenant God; and wishing you every blessing, I rest your ever faithful and affectionate friend,

"THOMAS SPENCER."

IX.

Harwich, Feb. 24, 1806.

"MY DEAREST FRIEND—More than a fortnight ago, according to agreement, I wrote to you; as I have not heard from you since that time, my mind is full of anxiety on that account, as I know not what to assign as a reason for it. I hope you received it, for I should never like our correspondence to be investigated by any body but ourselves. I hardly know how to write this letter; whether I should inform you of circumstances I mentioned in my last, (being in doubt whether you received it) or taking for granted that you have had it, shall I *tenderly* chide you for not answering it. I cannot think you have either forgotten me, or are grown careless about me, and yet what can I say? *I am full of conjectures.* Have you been so busy as not to have time to write; or have you written, put it in the post, and the letter miscarried? I hope you will write to me, and inform me which of these is the real case.—Need I tell you again that I am peculiarly comfortable in my situation, having nothing to render me otherwise but the absence of my *friend*, and my not having heard from *him:* nor from home either; for I wrote to my father, and have not yet received an answer, which I expected immediately; indeed I cannot at all account for these things.

"As Mr. Hordle was a student at Hoxton, I have learnt a few things respecting the nature of the place, which perhaps you will like to know, for who can tell but some future day you may take the second, third, and last step towards being connected with them. You told me you had taken the *first* some time ago. But to drop this. The students, then, find themselves *candles for their own studies, soap, towels, tea*, and they have one *gown* to study in, &c. they have family prayer altogether morning and evening: you know what they learn. I am very fond of Mr. H.'s preaching: we had three very fine sermons yesterday, on Exod. xxxiii. 16; 1 Cor. iv. 5; Eph. ii. 8. I have just begun to enter the heads of the sermons in a book, and I am sure he is like a father to me; I am indeed very well treated. I hope you are earnest in prayer, that God would let you know his will concerning you. O, my friend, I should think myself *very happy* if I could do any thing for you. Although I do not speak to you now, nor see you, nor hear from you, yet I do feel pleasure in praying for you. I never was better in my life than since I have been at Harwich. A day or two ago I began to learn Hebrew. I often think you would be in your element in this study, with the advantages of learning, &c. I begin now to have a *little* idea of Geography; know more Latin than before, and study every day Locke's Conduct of the Understanding, and Doddridge's Lectures; besides a deal of cursory reading, &c. for here is a very nice library, to which I have free access. I told you in my last to let me have Mr. E——'s address. Hope you will remember me to all our friends. Give my respects to Mr. J. F——, and T. E——. As I do not remember any thing else that I have to say, I conclude with subscribing myself, yours, by all the tender ties of friendship,

"THOMAS SPENCER."

X.

Harwich, April 4, 1806.

"MY DEAREST FRIEND—I received, with the greatest pleasure, your letter of the 29th of February, together with my father's; and, as I was sorry you did not write to me before, so was I equally grieved at the cause: I sympathize with you in your afflictions, and hope that you are now quite recovered and—the rest of the family. I believe you when you say it affords you so much pleasure to hear of my welfare. O! *Thomas*, pray for me that my very comforts do not become snares. I should like to have had more of the heads, texts, &c. of the sermons you have heard in London; and hope that you find the ministry of Mr. K—— and those you hear at Hoxton beneficial to your soul; for it is my earnest desire that, under the influences of the sacred Spirit, your soul may be like a well-watered garden. I (of course) hear Mr. H. three times on the Sabbath day, and I think I can say it has been to my profit: his sermons are indeed very *judicious, experimental and practical*, and I find it to be just the preaching *I want*. I keep a book, in which I put down the heads of most of his sermons, which, when it is full, I intend (if you would like) that you shall see. I suppose of an evening we have not less than four hundred and fifty people; in the day time not quite so many. There is a band of singers in the table pew, generally a bass viol is played, and Mr. H. preaches in a gown, and I think the people are more attentive than any I ever saw. Once in a fortnight Mr. H. preaches at the *work-house;* I have been twice, and I like it *very much*. In the week day I go to the Methodist chapel, and sometimes hear a good sermon there. I find by the Magazine that Mr. S—— is at Spa-fields chapel. I have spoken often about him to you, and have mentioned him in my letters (though by the bye I spelt his name wrong.) He is a Cheshunt student—has preached very frequently at Hertford chapel. I would advise you, if convenient, to go and hear him, for he is a very bold and very faithful preacher. If you do, give me a little account of the sermon, &c. If I were you, I would try to hear Mr. B———'s missionary sermon.

"I am very glad that you informed me of Mr. F.'s and Mr. W.'s conversation. I liked it all very well, except that about my preaching, and indeed I had much rather that Mr. F. had not mentioned that for various reasons. If you have heard any more, pray tell it me.

'*He must not be put too forward.*'

"But you have raised my curiosity very much

about the certain minister, who has, unsolicitedly, offered you his recommendation for Hoxton. But why this reservedness? I shall expect a friendly, satisfactory reason for your not telling me his name, &c. Do you think that I would abuse your confidence? I hope not—I think I should know better. As the month is expired, you *must* tell me in your next more about it, as whether you have seen this certain minister? what he said to you? &c. &c. I hope I have obeyed your request, and prayed for you; may God grant us both more of a praying spirit, and may he answer our petitions, one for another. I thank you for Mr. E.'s address. I have not yet wrote to him—*must*—though, Thomas, I think now I should be completely unhappy, were I again to have any thing to do with business, and I feel for you, as you say your time is wholly taken up in it every day from six in the morning to eleven at night. I hope that while your aversion to the cares of the world increases, your spiritual affections are more animated, and your whole soul, from day to day, transformed more into the likeness of our lovely Jesus.

'*The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.*'—You seem peculiarly pleased with this passage, observe therefore,

1st.—That it is the *righteous* God regards;—those who are redeemed by the Son's blood;—loved by the Father's grace;—sanctified by the Spirit's influence. Those who are weaned from the vanities of earth and time—whose affections are set on things above;—in a word, who are born of God, and bound for heaven.

2d.—That they must *pray*. Prayer is the breath of the new-born soul, a believer cannot live without it, for

> Prayer makes the darken'd cloud withdraw;
> Prayer climbs the ladder Jacob saw;
> Gives exercise to faith and love,
> And brings down blessings from above.'
>
> NEWTON.

3d.—They must pray *fervently*. 'Cold prayers,' saith one, 'do but beg a denial.' In vain we offer up lifeless devotion to a heart-searching and rein-trying God.

4th.—These prayers are *effectual*, and avail much; they avail much in the sanctifying of our souls, and forming Christ there.

"Pardon this digression, as these thoughts have just sprung from my own mind.

"I hope you continue to enjoy your Sabbaths more than ever? How delightful it is '*to dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of our life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and inquire in his temple.*'—That was Mr. H.'s text last Sabbath day morning and afternoon. In the morning he applied it to the church here below; showed what was meant by beholding the beauty of the Lord, and inquiring in his temple, and how desirable it was, &c. In the afternoon, he applied all (with the greatest propriety) to heaven. Two very excellent sermons.

"I cannot yet give up the thought that we shall soon live together again; if we are to be so favored, how thankful should I be; if not, we must learn to know no will but God's, and acknowledge that the Judge of all the earth will do right. As yet let us not despair, but commit all our concerns into the hands of our covenant God and heavenly Father. We know he will do all things well. My situation is as comfortable, or more so than ever, and I am considered like one of the family. We have a nice house, and here are only Mr. H., Mrs. H., the little child about eight months old—a sweet babe he is—the servant and myself. I read Virgil in Latin now, and what I do learn of any thing serves to show me more of my ignorance. May the Lord keep me humble. I have theological questions to study, such as,

'Wherein appears the possibility of a divine revelation?

'Why is it desirable?' &c.

"I may consult books upon the subject, and here is a very good library. You will not forget your promise to write in your next about grace thriving in your heart. As for me it is with tardy steps I creep, sometimes joying, and sometimes sorrowing. And yet without boasting, I think I can say I have known more of heart religion since I have been here than before; but it is very little altogether. I have experienced many happy moments in secret, such times as remind me of our last Sabbath afternoon together. But O! what a deal of pride, rebellion, carelessness, and all kinds of wickedness is there in my heart; I tremble to think of what I deserve for my former levity, &c. But O pray for me that I may find grace in the eyes of the Lord, and live to some purpose in the world. I am afraid that there are yet improper motives in my desiring the work of the ministry. Since I have been here I have seen some little of its nature, &c. I am sensible that no learning, or human qualifications are enough to fit me for that all-important work; and I hope, that God will pour down showers of grace on me, instead of what I deserve, 'vials of wrath.' When you give me a little account of your 'growth in grace,' and how the lamp of religion keeps alive, I hope you will retrace some of the paths in which the Lord your God has led you, and tell me something of your former experience, present enjoyments, and future hope. If you wish to go on from one degree of grace unto another, which I do not doubt, commune much with your own heart, read the Bible as much as possible, and above all things pray *fervently*. I am perfectly well in health, as I hope you are. My father told me in his letter that Mr. M—— is still at ——, and that the chapel was still continued. I should like to have all the numbers of the Youth's Magazine (but September and October last, those I have) if I could have them sent conveniently; and it is not worth while to send by the coach, for you know the carriage will be more than the books are worth. Wishing you every spiritual blessing, I remain your affectionate and faithful friend,

"THOMAS SPENCER."

XI.

Harwich, May 9, 1806.

"MY DEAR FRIEND—I received your two last letters with great pleasure. It is highly gratifying to me to discover a great, and I believe a growing attachment in you towards your friend, notwithstanding he is so far from you. In your letter of the 7th April you say you rather expected a gentle reproof from me for your not writing to me; if so, what ought I to expect from you? But knowing the kindness of your heart, I forbear any more upon that subject. I was glad to hear of your comfortable interview with your friends at Coggeshall, and like your method well of consulting with your father on these occasions. Let us always manifest an obedient and dutiful regard to the advice of our parents; they, you know, are older than we, and more experienced; and the light of nature, as well as that of divine revelation, enjoins us to love, reverence, and obey them. I should not have expected that —— would have acted so generously and friendly, as it appears he has done. I think from these circumstances there appears (something like) the kind hand of Providence, and I hope it will appear so to your satisfaction by and bye. I wait with anxiety the

result of your intended interview with the Rev. ———, of Chelmsford, and I need not tell you to make it a matter of prayer—you know full well the *importance*, *necessity*, and *power*, of the prayer of faith. Your cousin Ford should remember that if the *turnpike road* is got too bad for people to walk comfortably in, the *fields* are more pleasant, as well as much nearer. How different are the views of good people, even in the most trifling things. When we get to heaven, there will be an end of all differences in sentiment and disposition. But I would not have you imagine that I (now) prefer Hoxton only on the account of its pleasantness, and the orthodox views of its supporters; but I would wish myself, and would have you follow, the leadings of Providence in this as well as every other respect: if it appears the Divine will for you to go to Homerton, by all means go; but if not, you of course will not. However, you may be sure of one thing, and that is, that your friend will love you none the less for your preference of Homerton. But I do think that Hoxton will be the place for *you*. In your letter you have the *remarkable* words, 'respecting my intended subject, I do not remember that I promised an account of my own experience as to growth in grace.' Now perhaps you did not mean so in the letter referred to, but I understood it so. Your words were, 'I had a great deal to write of, I mean the best things, as, how grace thrives in the heart, &c. which I hope to *question* and write of in my next.' Now here by the word question I of course thought you meant *me*, by writing of it, some account of yourself. But it appears it was not so; and now I confess if it was not so designed, I do not know your meaning. I have been particular in stating this, in order to prevent mistakes. I hope with you that in your present situation you are learning lessons that will be beneficial to you all through life. I hope you will see more and more of the vanity of the pursuits of time and sense, and be more and more separated from a world lying in wickedness, as that is a good evidence of having found grace in the sight of the Lord. I perceive by your expressions that you are fired with zeal. I hope it is according to knowledge, and that you are not venturing upon what you may repent of in some future day. To say my own thoughts, I do not think you are influenced by any wrong motives. I am pleased with your self-dedication to God; and I heartily wish that he may hear all your prayers, bless you with an increase of grace and gifts, if he think fit; but he that has the most grace makes the best minister, and will rise to glory, honor and immortality, at last, and shall shine as the stars in the firmament, and be for ever blest; whilst the ungodly minister (O awful thought!) shall have his portion with hypocrites and unbelievers, shall be banished from the presence of the Lord, and be cast into outer darkness, the smoke of his torments ascending up for ever and ever. I wish you could see Brown's Address to his Students in Divinity, which is prefixed to his View of Religion (an excellent body of divinity.) You would there see something of the import of being a minister of the gospel. O! my friend, it made me exclaim, '*who is sufficient for these things!*'

"There is certainly a great pleasure in receiving letters, and writing to each other; you and I experience this, don't we? Indeed you dwell much on my mind. I think if we were to see each other again, and have a little good conversation, it would be like '*cold water to a thirsty soul;*' it would refresh us, call again into more lively exercise our warm sensations of affection. What a blessing it is, I often think, that we ever met together. I am very glad that I ever lived at Mr. Thodey's; I there met with a worthy friend when I had none, learned a few lessons I was ignorant of, and was introduced (in some measure by being there) to Mr. Wilson. Now it is true we are far from each other, but what then? You are pleased, I know, at my little improvement in knowledge; and you, I hope, are about entering upon the ministerial office; and when I think of that, I also am highly pleased. A few weeks more, and something will be done for you. I have often told you, both in conversation and correspondence, not to be discouraged at a view of your own insufficiency, and you know God has chosen the foolish things to confound the wise, and he works by means that prove his sovereign hand. But I must hint that your low views of yourself will do you no harm. Go on to despise the world and all the enchanting allurements it holds out, and be vigilant, for the adversary of whom you speak is never idle. How does he tempt us to think lightly of religion—*to foolish and unedifying conversation* —to offer up *short, cold,* and careless *prayers*, and I know not what beside. Pray, then, that while Satan is attempting to damp, nay quench the rising flame, the Holy Spirit may pour in plentifully the oil of grace, and cause it to rise to all eternity. You, I hope, do not intend to flatter me (for friends should never flatter, and I hate it) when you say, you think I am fitting for some active elevated sphere in the cause of Christ. Ah! Thomas, you do not see how unworthy I am to be a door-keeper in the house of my God, as I do, much less fill some *elevated station.* And indeed did I possess the wisdom of Solomon, the learning of Paul, and the eloquence of Apollos, without their piety what am I?—'*Like sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.*' I feel my need of divine grace, without which I am less than nothing, and can do nothing. What a dreadful thing must it be to have our parents, teachers, seminaries, gifts, examples, our Bibles, books, instructions, vows and resolutions, prayers and sermons, *all rise up in judgment against us!* The thoughts of it are enough to make our blood run cold. May the glorious and gracious God forbid such a doom for Jesus Christ's sake. To this I know you will say 'Amen.' On the other hand, how glorious must be the lot of the faithful sent minister of the gospel: methinks I see him rising (at the judgment day) from the long sleep of death, with a smile of holy pleasure on his sacred countenance, and heavenly glory in his soul. I see him approach the tribunal of his reconciled Judge, and having the pardon of all his sins made manifest before an assembled world, with a goodly number of seals to his ministry, he exclaims in the language of holy gratitude, peace, and triumph, '*Here am I, Father, and the children thou hast given me!*' O may such blessedness be yours and mine; this will ten thousand times more than compensate for the troubles and trials met with in the ministry. Amen, saith your longing soul.

"Saturday, May 10.—With respect to the work of grace on my own heart, I feel shy to say much about it, fearing that after all my profession I should become a cast-away, and the root of the matter not be in me. I feel such a lifeless frame of mind, such coldness in prayer, in short, I indeed think that I have more evidences of reigning sin than of the life of religion. I wish to 'read my title clear to mansions in the skies.' I wish to be more Christ-like, more heavenly and spiritual; but I can only say with David, '*My soul lies cleaving to the dust, quicken thou me according to thy word.*' I would fain believe, my God help and subdue my unbelief. I dare not say any thing, but hope and trust at present, nay hardly that, for I often feel such a gloom upon my mind that you cannot conceive of. I think it is wrong to give way to it, and I fear if I did I should become quite melancholy. One reason is, that I want my friend, and feel his loss. If you

were here, how could we relax our minds from study by a pleasant walk and agreeable conversation. When I walk out (if Mr. Hordle is not with me) there is no person whose company I much value. Sometimes one of the boys that Mr. Hordle teaches is with me; but I believe he had rather be at play than conversing about any thing that would do him good; and really I have walked so much alone lately that it gets quite insipid. When I first came, I enjoyed my solitary walks much better than I do now—what is the reason? I cannot tell: it is, however, one great comfort that I am so well provided for. Mr. and Mrs. H. had an only child, but eight months old, I think the most beautiful and lovely boy I ever saw: his smiles had often filled our hearts with joy, and the openings of his infant mind were delightful as the blossoms in spring. Though so young, he knew very well I loved him, and I know he was very fond of me—so pleased on my return after I had been out, and so very sensible for a child of his age. When I wrote you last he lay very ill, and I believe died the day after. His death grieved me very much, and I could not study for some time; but it is a comfort to reflect that he is now present with the Lord, and for ever blest. But what a trial to lose him! I felt much for his parents, who doated on him; and I confess I never loved a child as I did him. I think if we were to live together again, how happy we should be: I mean where we could pursue our studies together. If you are at Hoxton when I am, I hope we shall be in the same class. I should like you to go in just before me, or when I do, that so I might not be quite a stranger in the house, and have no one there that I know, for that would be very uncomfortable. You and I used to interest ourselves very much in the case of the highwayman that broke out of Hertford jail, and passed for a serious man. My father informs me, that he has been taken in his old courses, and hung a little while ago at Lancaster, an awful instance of hypocrisy and deceit. I read in a newspaper, that he gave a paper there to the church minister, in which he said, that he had broke open fifty houses, stole thirty horses, and committed more highway robberies than his memory could recollect. With respect to joining a church, I think it is your duty, as you therein give yourself up to God in solemn dedication—make a more open profession of his gospel, and declare yourself on the Lord's side. Join that church, (be which it will) where you enjoy much under the ministry, where you have often received spiritual nourishment for your immortal soul. I think you will do wrong if you do not join God's people in that manner, for it is an incumbent duty. Your going to Hoxton would not make any difference, for the students there sit down at the different places in London—some at Hoxton chapel—some at Mr. Brooksbank's—some at Mr. Clayton's, and in short wherever they have been members before, or where the minister admits them as occasional communicants. For myself, I cannot yet think of doing it. I am glad you are reading Halyburton's life, and hope you will find it profitable. I hardly know what to do about the Youth's Magazine—carriage is too dear; however, I think you had better send them with your next letter; all, you know, except September and October last, which I have.

"Questions lately studied.—'What perfections dwell in God, and how do you prove them to be in him without referring to the Scriptures?'

"'How do you prove that the Scriptures are the word of God?'

"'How do we know that the Scriptures have been faithfully conveyed to us and not corrupted?'

"I have not heard any thing of Samuel for these two letters; hope he is well. Make my best respects to him. And now, commending you to our glorious Saviour, and hoping that one day it will appear more particularly, that we were designed for great blessings to each other, I remain,

"Your affectionate and faithful friend,

"THOMAS SPENCER."

XII.

"*Harwich, June* 14, 1806.

"MY DEAREST FRIEND—I received your parcel the morning after you sent it, and read your letter with the greatest pleasure. You judge rightly when you say, you suppose that I was anxiously waiting to hear from you. The providential dealings of God with you have (I hope) filled me with wonder and praise. Surely both of us have great reason to say, '*Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name.*' Let us not forget any of his benefits, but for these displays of his goodness, dedicate our bodies and souls to his glory, which is only our reasonable service. Let us both rejoice, that God has put this his *treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of man.* Little did you expect a few years ago, that you should be providentially called into the work of the ministry; but now you can rejoice, that unto you, who, *in your own view*, are less than the least of all the saints, is this grace given, that you might preach among poor sinners the unsearchable riches of Christ. Observe now the dealings of Providence in this circumstance. You are in a waiting frame, and when so God appears to grant you the desire of your heart. He has now made your path clear before you, and as to its being the call of God, I have not the least doubt; but, however, I hope you will recollect, that though your way has been thus shown to you, it may not always be so: difficulties, great and many, may await us both in our journey through life; but God has said, when thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, and will prevent the floods from overflowing thee. Having such promises as these, my dear friend, let us press forward, and with holy resignation say, 'Where he appoints I'll go and dwell.' 'Tis true, we know not what a day may bring forth; but this we know, that God will never forsake those who put their trust in him, but will be their sun to illuminate them, their shield to defend them, and their God eternally to bless them. I do not at all wonder at your being perplexed in your mind about mentioning matters to ———. Had I been in your state, I should have dreaded it; but you did well in making it a matter of prayer before God, and God was very gracious in ordering it as he has done. You know that prayer to God is the best way of *making things sure*—so you, I trust, have found it. I should like to know the other circumstances at which you hint, but I dare say they are too tedious to mention; perhaps we may see each other soon, when *conversation* will settle it. I am much pleased, nay delighted, with the conversation you had with Mr. W. He is, I doubt not, a warm friend to the cause of Christ, and does all he possibly can to forward it in the world. I am like him in regard to zealous and earnest preachers, and like to see animation and life in a pulpit, and where the preacher's mind is fettered with notes there can be none. You know I thought, when I lived with you, that ——— and ——— were good sort of men; they would not do any harm, but wanted to see something of their growing usefulness. I don't doubt, but I shall soon have a letter from you, dated Hoxton academy, &c., and I wish we may be there together, for it will be very awkward for you or me at first to go there when there is nobody we know. I wish we might be in the same class, &c., so that we might be helpers one to another, and show that

we are the servants of the living God. I know that Mr. H. writes to Mr. W. about me. I know I am, as Mr. W. says, young and inexperienced; but I want divine grace, &c., to strengthen me for every duty, and prepare me for every duty. But, however, I don't think that Mr. T. knows any thing about the time when I shall be admitted. Though I did not mention it in my last, yet I do not think Mr.—'s is a proper church for you to join as a student; when considered as a Christian, merely, it would do very well, but as now you are to consider yourself as about entering the work of the ministry, it alters the case. I never heard Mr.———, therefore know nothing of him, or his church; but Mr. B——— I have heard more than once or twice; and if I were to recommend any church that I know in London as proper for you to join, it should be his. I have often thought that I should like to sit under him myself. Concerning *your religious experience—doctrinal sentiments—and ministerial motives**—I should rather think that your own plan, however simple, would be much better than any I can prescribe; but as you know most of my tenets pretty well, I do not know that I shall now write a confession, but will here give you a few directions only, which, if you like you can adopt, but if not, discard them totally. In your religious experience, I would observe the order of time, state when you first received serious impressions, how they were fastened on your mind, what effect they had on your conduct, &c., in your own way. In your doctrinal sentiments, begin with the object of worship —God. State your views of the persons in the Godhead, quote Scripture to prove your ideas of the Trinity. Then about man, his creation, fall, ruin, recovery, and so on. Be particular in saying there is no salvation but in Christ. Speak your opinion of the influences of the Spirit, the efficacy of divine grace in the conversion of sinners. The dealings of God with his people. The doctrines of election, persevérance, &c. Then that you think, (if you do) that it is the duty of all men to believe the gospel (I believe it.) That God will soon judge the world. That sinners will be sent to hell, and saints taken to heaven and glory, &c. &c. I have read Mr. H———'s piece against C., and I by no means approve of it. He evidently has written on a subject for which he is by no means capable; for he does not at all understand the difference between *natural* and *moral* inability—on which my mind has lately been much employed, and about which Mr. H. and I have conversed. There have been two pieces about it in some of the last numbers of the Evangelical Magazine. Now, *natural* or *physical* inability is such as a man feels who, we'll suppose, is quite blind, when another tells him to open his eyes. Now this is *naturally* impossible. *Moral* inability is such as a man feels if he is told to come to Harwich. He says, I am very busy, and indeed I can't come: now we know he *might* come if he *would*. He has power to walk to the coach, &c., but his *can not* is his *will not*. Now, which of these two is the inability of sinners to come to Christ? Pause here a moment, and think. I once was almost ready to suppose, it was like that of a blind man to open his eyes; but if so, why does God command him to see? Why does he feel remorse that he has not done so, on his death-bed, or at other times? He knows he might have done otherwise if he would. The swearer may forbear to take God's name in vain if he will: can he not? If not, why will not God hold him guiltless? Their defect then is not natural but moral: that is, it is a defect in the will, which nothing but grace can remedy. Now, then, I am well convinced with Mr. C. that the defect is not natural, but moral—what think you? Perhaps you never thought much on the subject. I would advise you to read a little tract of Moseley's on the subject. Now Mr. H. does not understand this distinction; but supposes, by saying it is not natural, we mean that it is not common to all, or universal: now we know it is, and that in this sense it is not natural: but had Mr. C. used the word *physical*, or explained his meaning a little, perhaps he would not have been attacked by an ——— *Antinomian*.

I am very glad you sent the Youth's Magazines: I like them very well. I am very sorry you were not at prayer meeting in time: but I attach not the least blame to you, because of your hard work on Saturday, and so late. I think there is generally something to embitter our comforts a little. I should also have rather heard that you were very happy in the time of prayer, than that you were very uncomfortable; but don't be cast down. Mr. W. encourages you; your friends do the same, and God appears to be on your side; and you know, if he is for you, none can prevail against you. Do, now, take encouragement from the circumstance of the cheesemonger's man, (now the Rev. J. G., of Devon,) and Mr. C. &c., and I am confident, that as God sends you into the work of the ministry, he will give you abilities sufficient. Trust, then, in him—pray to him—be humble —be resigned—and I do hope you will experience divine consolations, heavenly support, and abilities sufficient. The preaching at the poor-house pleased me much; your text was very appropriate; and there is something in the nature of the gospel which is peculiarly adapted to the poor. Now there does not seem any congruity between a fine chapel, very elegant and grand, with carriages at the door for the hearers, and the doctrines of the meek and lowly Jesus. This does not, I say, appear fit; and the gospel was originally preached to the poor. I am glad you was not embarrassed at all, and hope you will be the means of doing much good. Get your subject well into your mind for Mr. K.'s room; think of how you shall arrange it, &c., as Mr. W. told you. Tell me in your next your plan, heads, &c., and whether you use notes or no. If you think you cannot do without short ones, use them; but do not slavishly attend to them. I think you had better work it well into your mind first, and then deliver it extempore, or without notes. Don't be too delicate, or mind too much the smells of rooms, and so on; but consider Him who endured all kinds of hardships, lest you be weary and faint in your mind. I find I must not expect to hear from you till after your examination in July: well, let me have the more when you do send. About the logical definition, I shall say no more; only that I think you are very much mistaken when you imagine that I increase so much in knowledge, for I really do not think I do so much as I ought; indeed these blundering letters are evidence of it, so pray don't flatter. I did write a little in my last about my present experience, I believe, because I thought it was what you wanted. You say it is not *quite* possible to recollect all one has written in a former letter: I say, I know it is quite impossible. You say you should like to see the answers to the questions which I sent you: having room, I will transcribe some of them for you.

"Question.—'How do you prove the existence of a God, without referring to the Scriptures, or from the light of nature?'

"Answer.—'(1st) All nations, heathens, Jews, Mahometans, and Christians, harmoniously consent

* Referring to that summary of his views on these points, which, as a candidate for admission into Hoxton academy, his friend was about to present to the committee of that institution.

that there is a God, who created, preserves, and governs the world.'

"'(2d) There is a great impression of Deity on the mind of every man; that is, an indistinct idea of his being, and a readiness to acquiesce in the truth of his existence.'

"'(3d) The works of creation demonstrate it; their alterations and dependence prove them not to have been from eternity—they could not form themselves—chance could not produce them—matter cannot change its own form, or produce life or reason; therefore there must be a God.'

"'(4th) It is agreed from the support and government of the world—the heavenly bodies—seasons—weather—vegetables—sagacity and instinct of animals—herbs, &c.'

"'(5th) From the punishments which have been inflicted on nations and persons for their excessive immoralities.'

"'(6th) From the terror and dread which wound men's consciences when guilty of crimes which other men do not know, or are not able to punish or restrain, as in the case of Nero, Domitian, and others, and that, too, when they labored to persuade themselves and others that there was no God, &c.' *See Brown, Doddridge's Lectures, Ridgley, Buck's Dictionary, &c.*

"Question.—'How do you prove that the Scriptures have been faithfully conveyed to us?'

"Answer.—'In translations those books retain manifest marks of their Eastern original.'

"Notwithstanding all that Christ and his apostles inveighed against the wickedness of the Jews they never charged them with corrupting a single text in the Bible. The various sects among the Jews, viz. Pharisees, Sadducees, &c. have rendered it impossible that they could corrupt them, as well as the animosities which have ever since prevailed between the Jews and Christians, so that neither of them could vitiate these sacred oracles, without being shamefully detected. Had the Jews attempted to corrupt these sacred books, it would certainly have been in those passages in which the fearful wickedness of their nation is described, and Jesus Christ magnified and honored; but in none of them do we find the least mark of concealment or corruption. That they should be corrupted among Christians, is equally incredible: such was the multitude of copies, hearers, readers, and even sects, among them, that it is impossible they should ever have succeeded. Through the errors of transcribers, &c. the comparer of a multitude of copies cannot fail to find a number of translations.'—*See Brown's View of Religion.*

"Question.—'What proofs have you that man was at first created righteous and holy?'

"Answer.—'(1st) Universal tradition; for all nations have supposed mankind to have once been in a holy and happy state.'

"'(2d) The nature of things; for it seems very improbable that so holy and so good a God should have formed mankind, in the original constitution of their nature, in so corrupt and sinful a state.'

"'(3d) The natural resemblance men have to God in the spirituality, intelligence, and immortality of their souls. Gen. ix. 6. James iii. 9.'

"'(4th) The express declarations of Scripture: Eccl. vii. 29. Gen. i. 26, 27. Colos. iii. 10. Eph. iv. 24.'

"These will now serve you for further meditating on, as well as the subject of natural and moral inability; your opinion of which I shall expect in your next letter. If you can, I would advise you to get Moseley's piece, or read attentively the pieces in the Magazine; one of them is a letter from Dr. Watts. I told Mr. Hordle about your present prospects; I did not see any occasion to secret it, as Mr. W. knows it, and so many others: he is pleased on the account of it. He will be in London, if spared and well, on Wednesday, the 24th instant, but do not think he will be there long enough to preach, for he is going much further, and will be away for a month, at which time we expect a supply from Hoxton: we shall have a student come down and stay all the time; which of them it will be I do not know. I have spoken to Mr. H. about Brown's View of Religion, and he says it is quite at your service: I shall enclose it, and hope you will read it attentively through—be sure you read the address to students, at the beginning; when you have done with it (he will not mind your keeping it a month or more) send it by coach. In it you will find a whole body of divinity in a very little compass. The part on the light and law of nature is very excellent. He was a most eminent man, and mighty in the Scriptures: may you and I be like him. I am glad to hear the good news you give me of your brother; I hope it will appear to be the work of grace upon his soul, and that he may really be converted. I like your plan of having a prayer meeting much—may you all experience the blessings you pray for.

"As to drawing landscapes and plans you know I never was any hand at it, nor do I think of doing any thing in it; if I do you shall have it. Perhaps I may give Samuel a note. You cannot receive this until Tuesday morning, although written on Saturday, because of the coach, so that I shall have time enough between now and then for thinking if there be any thing else to send. Wishing you every spiritual and temporal blessing, I remain your affectionate, though unworthy, friend,

"THOMAS SPENCER."

XIII.

September 4, 1806.

"MY DEAREST FRIEND—"How wonderfully has Providence appeared for you and for me. This time twelvemonth beheld us both buried in a glove shop—buried, did I say—I recall the word, for we then enjoyed what we do not now, mutual conversation, and each other's company. Let us hope that the time may come when we shall again enjoy that. I am very glad that you succeeded so well as you did in your sermon before the committee; take encouragement from that circumstance to trust God for all your future discourses. The Sabbath day, August 17, though I found that I could not conveniently omit any one of the services, yet I assure you I did not forget your request. I cannot say that I think it is right (especially in me) to omit public worship for private devotion. And if I had done it, my conduct would in all probability have been more inspected about it than I should wish. I have not seen the rules of Hoxton academy; I do not think Mr. H. has them; should like to see them much; hope you will send them next time. I am fully persuaded of the propriety, nay, duty, of your joining yourself to a church, which now I hope you have done; but for my own part, I must confess I have excuses for not doing it; and what church could I join now? Perhaps you say, Mr. Hordle's. I answer, there is no church I should so like to be a member of as his; but do you see a propriety in my being a member here, when I do not expect to be here any longer than Christmas? There could not in my view have been a more suitable pastor for you than Mr. B. I hope you will find his people as suitable as himself. I approve too of your attending the prayer meeting at his place of a morning, and hope you find that convenient. May you have precious opportunities in the chapel, at the Lord's table, and at the prayer meeting. You praise my

verses too much. Indeed they were only the hasty productions of a few moments, and I have no copy of them, for I only wrote them on a slate, and then copied them on the letter. However, I am glad you receive them as a token of our regard and growing affection for each other.* I would advise you by all means to be very friendly with the young men, those with whom you can consistently be so. I mean the more pious, and those whom you feel most disposed to associate with. There are, no doubt, a variety of tempers, dispositions and ways in the academy, and it is there, I dare say, as in other places, some good and some bad. I do not wonder at your finding study to be wearisome and laborious. Solomon found it so. Eccl. xii. 12. Others find it so. I sometimes find it so, but I am persuaded it will not be always so with you: and you should recollect that it is so different from what you have lately been engaged in, that I should wonder if it did not appear strange to you. But I should like to know what you are studying that is so difficult; is it Latin, Greek, English, Hebrew, or what? Now I do long to be there for the sake of your company as much as you wish me there. O, how charming it would be for us to study together. How cheerfully would I give you every instruction in my power. How willingly would I forego my own studies for the sake of improving the mind of a dear friend!—Such a time *may* come, and that's all I know of it; for, as to when it will be, I confess I know no more than you do. This only I know, that I shall leave Mr. Hordle at Christmas, and shall then see you, my father, mother, &c. who, I know, will be pleased to see me; but whether I shall come again to Mr. Hordle's or not, I believe nobody knows. I think that it is more likely that you should know before me, for Mr. Wilson and the committee have the management of it. I have one request to make to you which I hope you will grant, and that is that you write to my father at Hertford to tell him where you now are, &c. I know he will be very glad to hear of your welfare. Tell him that it was by my desire you write to him, &c. This request you *must*, *must* fulfil. I hope then my dear friend, you may be kept of God from following evil examples, (if such there be in a dissenting academy) and that it may appear that you are designed to fill some important station in the church of Jesus. Would it be amiss if we were both to learn Doddridge's 72d hymn, entitled, 'Isaiah's Obedience to the Heavenly vision.' I know you will like the hymn much. There is one thing I do not like in Hoxton academy, that is, their not learning Hebrew without the points, which are little dots or specks put under and about the letters. See on the commandments which are hung over the fire-place in the lecture room at the academy, if there are not such. Now, about these points there is a great dispute between the punctists and those who are not for their use. The punctists (Mr. S. is a strong one) contend that they are of great use. Some say they are of divine authority. The great Mr. Romaine, and the late learned Mr. Parkhurst, oppose this idea, and say that they are only little dots or specks added by ill-designing men to the letters. I feel inclined to believe them. Now, I dread almost the learning it with points, as it is extremely difficult; without them, it is simple and easy. Mr. H——— thinks they are of use, but does not think them of equal authority to the letters; and scarcely ever reads with them. Now, he thought it best for me to learn it without points with him, and then at the academy I could learn with them, and so read both ways. I have compiled a lexicon myself, containing the roots of all the words in the language—that is, I have quite abridged Parkhurst's very valuable one (and what no Hebrew student should be without) into a portable form for my own use. Now I hope your mind will be eased, and your anxiety removed, and with the warmest affection,

"I remain, your ever faithful friend,

"Thomas Spencer."

* Those who may be anxious to see the verses inserted in the Memoirs, are referred to page 196, for the reasons of their omission.

XIV.

Harwich, Oct. 14, 1806.

"My dearest friend—As it is now considerably more than a month since you wrote me a note from Hoxton academy, and I answered it, I conclude that a letter from me will be what you now desire; and yet I am not quite certain whether you should not have written first; but by way of compensation for my too long silence before, I am willing to converse with you on paper. And as Mr. Hordle is gone to Ipswich to-day, to an association of ministers, and I have nothing particular to be engaged in besides, I embrace the opportunity. You are now, I suppose, a little inured to study, and begin to find the difficulties of a student's life not so many as you apprehended they were. I long to know in what studies you are engaged, and how you like them. I have just begun the Greek language; so of course do not know much about it, my time having been of late principally employed in the Hebrew, of which I am very fond, especially as I now read it 'unsophisticated by Rabbinical points.' I please myself with the idea of seeing and conversing with you in the course of about *ten weeks;* but at that time there will be something else which I shall not so much admire. Do you ask me what it is? It is, my dear friend, nothing less than appearing before the committee of Hoxton academy. The thought of it makes me almost tremble. Yesterday morning Mr. Hordle told me that I must prepare the account of my experience, sentiments and motives for wishing the ministry, by November, to be then laid before the gentlemen of the committee. This you know must be done; and when I go to London about Christmas, I must go through all that painful task, which, as it respects you, is all over. He told me, too, that he supposed there would be some demur about admitting me merely on the account of my youth; but he does not know that it will be so as to hinder my admittance. Mr. Wilson has, it appears, written to Mr. H. about it; so, if the affair succeeds well, I shall be in the academy after Christmas *with you.* That one circumstance, your company and friendship, will make amends for all my trouble of mind on the occasion. You may be sure I shall communicate every circumstance to you, and keep nothing back, that so by one occurrence and another, our mutual attachment and sincere friendship may be increased and strengthened. What a *long* separation we have experienced: may we be brought together again to strengthen each other's hands, and be both engaged in the best employment. You must inform me in your next, how long you think it will be before you begin to preach, and tell me all your places of preaching, texts, plans, &c. I hope you have written to my father, as I requested you would. I believe they are going on as usual at Hertford. Mr. M. continues among them. May great grace rest upon them all. I do not doubt that I shall feel some degree of uneasiness when the time comes for my separation from my friends here at Harwich. I mean such as Mr. Hordle, &c. &c. But my satisfaction will be, that I shall see you who are still, and I hope ever will be, my dearest friend. We live in a world of changes. Life is indeed a chequered scene. And here we have no continuing

city. May we seek one to come. May it be our happiness to enjoy the favor of Him who never changes, but is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. When I consider my exceeding sinfulness and depravity, besides my inability, I feel almost *disposed to wish* my views had never been directed towards the ministry, but it does appear a call of Providence. How could I do any thing else than come here. And now, perhaps, a door may be opened even for my being a student at Hoxton; but I shall go there under several disadvantages; for, being so young, I may expect a good deal of contempt from some self-sufficient and arrogant students, (if such there are) and you know they stay no longer than four years, and after that I shall be but twenty years old, and what can I then say to old experienced Christians. I do indeed feel a deal of discouragement. 'O may the Lord encourage me,' &c. But I shall come under some advantages; for, as I am *not altogether ignorant* of many things taught at Hoxton academy, I shall find my studies easier than if I had to begin learning them, &c. I wish we could be in one class. Another disadvantage which Mr. Hordle has told me of is this—The students generally spend their money which they are paid for preaching, in books,* &c. Now, I shall be too young to preach for at least these four years, consequently I can have no books, &c. till that time. This appears a very great disadvantage. However, I would wish to leave all in the hands of God. He knows what is best for me. And if I am one of those who love God, and are the called according to his purpose, he will make all things work together for my good. I want that calm disposition which is careful for nothing, but in every thing by prayer and supplication, makes known its requests unto God. I often reflect on the dealings of Providence with us when I first came to Mr. T.'s. You, I suppose, had not the least prospect of being a student at Hoxton. And I could not see how my coming there to learn that business, could at all further my preparation for that sacred work. We there became friends. I was there just long enough to secure a worthy and affectionate friend, and to have the notice of Mr. Wilson. Now you, too, have left Mr. T. and are in the academy. I went, you know, home, not knowing what the event would be. Providence has sent me here; and O, 'what am I, or my father's house, that he has brought me hitherto.' We are now blind to futurity. We know not where we shall be placed in future life, whether far from, or near to each other. I hope you are happy in your own soul, and that you live near to God. There is a great danger of forgetting the concerns of our own souls, whilst we are constantly employed in studying divine things. I know a little of this from experience, and perhaps you do. I hope you continue to pray for me; that I may be kept from sin and evil, for you know '*the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.*' Does your brother David make progress in the divine life? You must, in your next letter, give me some account of the change which I hope is wrought in him, for I feel an affectionate regard for all who belong to you. I ought to write to Mr. E———. Is he well? When you see him, remember me to him, and also to your cousin F——. Tell him to write to me, if it will suit him. You may, likewise, if you please, tell him how my affairs stand, as I have stated to you. It will be needless for me to give you any advice respecting the composition of your sermons, or the prosecution of your studies, as you, without doubt, have access to so many books on the subject. I hope you will read 'Watts' Improvement of the Mind.' I think it must he charming to attend Walker's lectures on philosophy. Do you attend them? I should like it very much. Mr. H. told me, that he did give lectures at the academy: of course you are there when he does. You know now when to expect me in London, a little before Christmas, cannot say the exact day; so that now, if you like, you may count the time. Do not be long before you let me hear from you; and when you write, write a good deal. I remain, with the tenderest affection, your sincere and faithful friend,

"THOMAS SPENCER."

Such, at this early age, were the letters of this amiable youth. For the introduction of so large a number it is unnecessary to apologize, since that heart is surely in an unenviable state which can derive no pleasure or profit from their perusal. Their simplicity is not their smallest ornament; whilst for the many useful hints which they suggest, as well as for the fervent and exalted piety which breathes throughout the whole, they may be consulted with considerable advantage by youthful candidates for the sacred office. Let such as early feel the desires he felt, and pant with an equal ardor for the work of God, imitate his modest diffidence—his devotional temper—his jealousy of the motives which influenced his choice—his intimate communion with his own heart—his love of retirement—his habitual reference of his affairs to the will of God—his addictedness to self-examination and to prayer—and above all, that deep and solemn consciousness of the important work in which he desired, with fear and trembling, to be engaged!

In resuming the thread of the narrative, which the introduction of these extracts from his correspondence has suspended, it cannot but be gratifying to the reader, to be presented with that deep impression of Mr. Spencer's call and qualifications for the Christian ministry which his familiar intercourse with him had produced on Mr. Hordle's mind.

In a recent letter to a friend, that gentleman observes:—

"I have had but one opinion concerning our late young friend, which is—that he was born a preacher, and as much called to it, as Jeremiah to the prophetic, or Paul to the apostolic office. All the powers of his soul were evidently formed for it. While he was under my roof, preachers and preaching were the constant topics of his discourse; and those studies which had an immediate reference to them were his delight. His remarkable gift in prayer, though then just turned of fifteen, astonished and pleased all that heard him. He usually took his turn in leading the devotions of our little family; and in his attendance on my ministry, I have some-

* It may perhaps be considered as departing from the design of this volume, or descending too much to minute particulars—yet I cannot satisfy myself without directing the eyes of those gentlemen who may have the care of providing supplies for the pulpit in destitute churches, or in cases of the pastor's absence, to this important circumstance. But few of the students in our academies are overburthened with money—yet money is absolutely necessary for the purchase of books, without which their studies must be considerably retarded. Deacons, and others whom it may concern, should bear this in mind, in the compliments which they may make them for their occasional services: and remember, that there is no case in which they can with greater delicacy or propriety, display a generous regard to their wants in this respect, than when thus remunerating them for their acceptable labors. It is needless to express a disapprobation, which every candid mind must feel, of a conduct directly the reverse of this, which is perhaps too often practised when the consideration is diminished for the very reason on account of which it ought to be increased—it is but a *student.*

times seen the feelings of his heart in the tears that gushed from his eyes."

In perfect accordance with these sentiments are those expressed by the same gentleman, in a letter to a friend at Liverpool, dated Harwich, 13th Dec. 1811:

"Of his genuine piety, his fine imagination, his early attachment to theological pursuits, his love of study in general, his amiable disposition, and the powerful bias of his mind to the work of the Christian ministry, I have repeatedly declared my firm conviction; and had Divine Providence spared his valuable life, I have no doubt, as his judgment ripened, his character, excellent as it was, would still have improved."

Whilst such were the impressions, so truly honorable to his character, left upon his tutor's heart, by the sweetness of his temper, and the vigor of his mind—it is pleasing also to observe the grateful and lively remembrance which the pupil cherishes of the kindness of his early friend.

In a letter, addressed to the Rev. Mr. Hordle, from Hertford, he observes:—

"The day of my examination is now fixed for the 7th of January. To that day, dear Sir, I look forward with trembling: may God grant me all that strength and boldness I shall then need. It is impossible for me to describe my feelings the night I left you. I tried to suppress any outward expressions of them as well as I could. But O! 'tis trying to part with friends who are become *very dear* to us; but is it not, also, comforting to look forward to a never ending eternity, when those who are cemented into one glorious body by the bonds of divine love shall never part?" Afterwards he adds:—"For my part, I desire to be entirely his, (God's) but still I find a heart of unbelief, ever prone to depart from the living God. I hope I feel my own unfitness for the important undertaking, for which it appears God designs me. May he keep me holy and humble, and fit me for all he has in reserve for me in the womb of Providence, whether prosperous or adverse."

In a subsequent letter, dated Hoxton, 25th March, 1807, he says—"I am told S——, of Kingston, is going to Harwich: hope you will find him a blessing to your family, and when he shall leave you, may he review with as much pleasure the year 1807, as I do the year 1806.—I trust I shall be constantly enabled to obey the kind advice which you gave me, and to lay every human attainment at the foot of the cross of Jesus; to dedicate all I have to him, of whom I would always esteem it my highest honor to learn; to give up every thing that I may be called to sacrifice for the promoting of his glory, and constantly to seek not my own things, but the things which are Jesus Christ's."

In another, towards the close of the year 1807, he writes:—

"I shall never forget the year I spent at Harwich; viewing one circumstance with another, I doubt not, but that it was as happy a twelvemonth as I shall ever live."

With such mutual feelings and expressions of affectionate regard, was Mr. Spencer's departure from Mr. Hordle's family attended. And this review of them will not be in vain, if it suggests to the young persons who may contemplate this imperfect portrait of one, whom living they so much admired, the vast importance of that impression, which the conduct of their childhood or their youth may leave in the scenes of their earliest association. For the most part, the character of the *youth* is the character of the *man*. If, on the circle of his earliest intercourse, an unfavorable impression of his disposition or his conduct is produced, there it is likely to remain; but, alas! there it cannot be confined; it not unfrequently travels further than the person with whom it is connected, and the character is familiar where the countenance is unknown. Who that has a respect, then, for himself, but must be anxious that the impression, upon which so much depends, should be a happy one; and that the correcter habits of maturer age should not be counteracted in their favorable operation by the injurious fame, or unpleasant recollections of his early years.

But we must follow the amiable object of our contemplation to a new scene.

The following are copious extracts from the papers which he submitted to the inspection of the committee at Hoxton, on his formal application for admission into that institution; they were accompanied by a note to T. Wilson, Esq.

Harwich, Nov. 10, 1806.

"Honored Sir—With diffidence I present the following account of my short experience, doctrinal sentiments, and motives for wishing to engage in the solemn and important work of the ministry, to your judgment and that of the committee. I am, with the sincerest gratitude for your favors, your humble servant,

"Thomas Spencer."

Harwich, Nov. 10, 1806.

"It was my happiness to be born of parents, who maintained a regard for real piety and the fear of God; by them I was, from my infancy, taught to read the Scriptures, together with other books of a serious nature. I think I may safely say, that from my childhood I felt some more than common impressions on my mind, with respect to the existence and perfections of God, the evil and awful consequences of sin, and the advantages of being religious; but alas! these impressions, though so frequently felt, had not that abiding influence which they have had on the minds of others, but were like the '*morning cloud and the early dew which passeth away.*' As I grew rather older, I began to perceive some excellencies in religion, and to envy the happiness, which I believed serious people enjoyed. I knew something of the form of religion and the doctrines of it, from having been taught catechisms, and lessons calculated to give youthful minds some ideas of the worship and conduct which God requires. Yet notwithstanding this, I gave too much (far too much) attention to the reading of novels and romances, the unhappy effect of which I lament to the present day. Many of these books I procured of lads, without the knowledge of my father. I felt a degree of pleasure in hearing lively, animated sermons; but I have reason to believe that this sprung from a desire to please my friends, and give myself an opportunity of imitating the preacher's voice and gesture. I also composed little pieces of poetry on sacred subjects, which I have since destroyed, because I then knew nothing of experimental, vital godliness, and of course was only mocking God in them; but I did not give up making verses. All this while, I was totally ignorant of that divine principle of grace in the heart, without which, I am sensible, nothing we can do is acceptable to God. I knew nothing of the Holy Spirit's work, in convincing me of sin, and leading me to Jesus Christ as my Saviour. I knew nothing of communion with God and with his Son. I hope some of the sermons of Mr. Ebenezer White, of Hertford, were not altogether useless to me, as well as some which I heard at Lady Huntingdon's chapel there; but from my conduct at that time, in various particulars, I cannot say that I had experienced what was meant by being born again. If you ask me from what time I date my conversion to God, I must say, that the exact time I cannot tell; but I think I may

also say, that the Lord drew me gradually to himself, and by degrees I loved devotional exercises more and more; and I hope that I have, within these four years, experienced many refreshing seasons. How I wish to have my evidences brightened, as it respects personal interest in the Lord Jesus Christ! I desire to cast my all upon him, and wait his will concerning me. However short my experience in the divine life has been, can I not appeal to God, and say, '*Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee?*'

"I hope that my reasons for wishing to be a laborer in the Lord's vineyard are sincere, and that they do not spring from any improper motives. If I should be called into it, I pray that I may be kept faithful, and never shun to declare the whole counsel of God. As I know something of the excellency of the ways of wisdom, I am anxious that my fellow-mortals may be partakers of the same grace, and that they may be brought to know God, and experience the riches of divine love and mercy in Christ Jesus: and if God should so honor me, as to make me an instrument in his hand, of doing them real good, how happy should I be; how willing to endure hardships for Jesus' sake. As I trust God has given me a desire to act for his glory, and I know that he is glorified in the salvation of sinners, I am willing, if He should call me to the work, to engage in it. I am aware, that it is an arduous and a difficult work, yet from these principles, I would fain be a faithful minister of Jesus Christ. I would follow the leadings of Divine Providence. By the good hand of my God upon me, I am brought hitherto; and although some circumstances are against me, yet, 'where he appoints, I'll go and dwell.' I am not quite sixteen years old, yet young as I am, I have committed many sins, and experienced many mercies. Now, unto Him that is able to keep me from falling, and to present me before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, for ever and ever. Amen.

"I believe in one God as the object of religious worship; that this God is from everlasting; and that in our Jehovah there are three distinct persons, viz. the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and yet these three are one; that this is a mystery which we cannot explain, yet we must believe, because it is declared in holy writ. That man was created holy, but fell from his original rectitude, and sunk himself and all his posterity into sin and wo. I believe also, that God from all eternity elected and chose his own people unto eternal salvation; that men are in a lost state and condition, and are spiritually dead; that they cannot be saved by any merit or works of their own, but only by the righteousness of Christ the Saviour; that it is by the operation of God the Holy Spirit on the mind of man, that he becomes a sensible sinner; that his understanding must be enlightened before he can choose God for his portion, or the paths of religion as those in which he will walk. It was for this end and purpose that Christ Jesus came into the world, viz. to save sinners by his own blood; and I am persuaded that there is salvation in no other but in him, and that '*he is able to save to the very uttermost all that come unto God by him.*' I believe that he is the eternal God, '*the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever;*' that his grace is all sufficient, his name, person, and all that concerns him, is precious to them that believe; that those who exercise a living faith upon him, are justified from all their sins—at the same time I know, that believers are called to be holy, and that it is by the consistency of their walk, that they are to evidence to those around them that their profession is sincere, for '*without holiness no man shall see the Lord.*' As I am fully satisfied with respect to the divine origin of the Scriptures, and the inspiration of the holy men who wrote them, so I believe, that they are the unerring standard by which to try our faith, and upon which we are to rest our opinions. I believe, that the people of God should form themselves into separate churches, that they may enjoy the benefit of divine ordinances, such as baptism and the Lord's Supper, together with the hearing of the word, &c. I believe, that the ordinance of baptism is to be administered to the children of believers, inasmuch as it is a sign of their admission into the visible church, and as it is emblematical of the giving of the Holy Ghost, and that it is to be administered by sprinkling. I believe, that, notwithstanding all the Christian's enemies and dangers, he shall hold on his way, and grow stronger and stronger; and though the doctrine of final perseverance has been much abused, as well as its truth much questioned, it is an article of my faith, because God's word declares it. I believe in the approach of a judgment day—the eternal glory of believers, and the insufferable torments of the wicked in hell. I believe that God will have the whole glory of the salvation of those who are saved for ever and ever; and that through all eternity they will ascribe dominion, power and glory to Him who loved them, and washed them in his own blood—at the same time, sinners will everlastingly blame *themselves* for their perdition and wo."

On the 7th of January he appeared at Hoxton, before the committee, and underwent the examination which he had so long and so anxiously anticipated—with success and honor: was admitted a student, and became immediately an inmate of the house. In a letter to his friend Mr. Hordle, dated Hoxton, January 21st, 1807, he says—

"Two things make this day remarkable to me: one is, that it is my birth-day, as I am now sixteen years old; the other is, that I have been a fortnight in this house. On Wednesday, the 7th inst., that long dreaded day, I appeared before the committee. Your imagination may represent a little boy speaking before them. I felt a good deal of timidity, and waited the event with feelings of anxiety."—"I hope I can say I feel the importance of that work for which it appears God in his providence has designed me: but oh! I need larger degrees of grace to fill that station in such a manner, as that my own soul, and the souls of my fellow creatures may be benefited thereby."—"I recall to my mind occurrences which transpired when I was at Harwich—O may I have all God's dealings sanctified unto me. I want a deeper acquaintance with my own heart, and a more influential knowledge of God my Saviour."

That, on his entrance into the academy at Hoxton, Mr. Spencer was no novice in the knowledge and experience of divine things, is obvious from a perusal of the papers above cited. With a mind already the subject of considerable culture, and habits formed for the pursuits of science, he commenced his academical course under circumstances the most auspicious. The importance of such a previous preparation in candidates for the Christian ministry, and the patronage of our dissenting colleges, is not, perhaps, sufficiently considered. It is to be regretted, that so many enter without having previously obtained the lowest rudiments of general science, or even a tolerable acquaintance with their native tongue. The time allotted for a student's residence is, in the most liberal institutions, but short, compared with the immense labor and magnitude of the object to be obtained. But much of this time, short as it is, must be expended in the inculcation of those first principles of knowledge, which might be easily obtained elsewhere; and then when the student is somewhat prepared for studies

more suitable to the dignity of a college, he begins to preach. Thus an attention which ought to be undividedly devoted to the labors of the study, and the exercises of the class, is partly lavished on preparations for the pulpit and public services. Hence arose the plan, so judiciously adopted in certain cases, in connection with the college of which Mr. Spencer was a member, and of the beneficial tendency of which he was so striking an example, of sending the candidates who may be defective in these radical points, or too young for admission, to some pious and able minister for preparatory instruction. But these instances, the offspring of a peculiar necessity, show the importance of an institution, founded expressly for preparatory studies —that so a matter of such vast importance to the respectability of the ministry may not be left to the casual benevolence of liberal and enlightened individuals, or any happy combination of circumstances in a solitary case.*

In the mean time, to remedy, as far as may be, by his own exertions, this serious defect, should be an object of conscientious regard to every young man whose views are directed to the Christian ministry. By a diligent improvement of his time—by a careful employment of those smaller portions of it, which in too many cases are suffered imperceptibly to slide away—aided by the friendly direction and advice of some prudent and well-informed minister, which may without much difficulty be in every case obtained—any one of tolerable capacity and perseverance might afford his own mind a considerable degree of cultivation, and attain a portion of knowledge, ere his entrance into an academy, most favorable to the facility and success of his pursuits whilst there.

These remarks more particularly apply to those young men, who, with views directed towards the ministry, are still engaged in secular employments, and to whom the privileges of an academy must be, in the first instance, regarded as a distant object.

Little of importance can be expected to have transpired, in connection with the early part of Mr. Spencer's residence at Hoxton. It appears, however, that here, as in the Poultry and at Harwich, his interesting appearance and amiable manners soon gained him the love and esteem of all. The tutors and the students alike felt an interest in this new and youthful member of their literary society—and he applied himself with diligence to the improvement of those advantages which he there enjoyed. He was now introduced to a wider range of observation and of study. But whilst a respect to the orders of the institution, and a desire to render himself, by useful acquirements, respectable in any circle in which it might be his future lot to move, induced him to apply with becoming diligence to the various occupations assigned him, he yet dwelt with peculiar attachment on such as were more immediately connected with the work of preaching. And with an ardent desire to be early and extensively employed in the ministry of the gospel, a desire strengthened and confirmed by time, it can be no matter of surprise, that to this darling object were directed all the hours of his leisure, and all the ardor of his soul.

At the vacation in June he returned to his father's house at Hertford. During his stay there he preached his first sermon in public. It was at the small village of *Collier's End*, six miles from Hertford. His auditory consisted of about thirty plain country people—and his text was 1 John i. 7, "*The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin.*" Simple and unlettered, however, as his audience might be, they had sufficient penetration to discover the uncommon talents of their youthful preacher; which, together with the novelty and loveliness of his juvenile appearance, excited in that little village an astonishment and admiration, which have since circulated through all the districts of the great metropolis, and almost every town in Great Britain. How beautiful is the progression which marks all the dispensations of nature, providence, and grace. From the smallest springs the mightiest rivers rise, to promote the fruitfulness or waft the commerce of the world. From the grain of mustard seed, the kingdom of heaven gradually rises and expands, till it becomes a great tree, beneath whose shade all the nations of the earth repose; and in the history of individuals—from the day of small things, has not unfrequently arisen a career, whose brilliancy has dazzled and surprised the world; and from the remarkable concurrence of circumstances, events the most important to the interest of the individual, and the happiness of mankind, have sprung. It is for the most part denied to men, who move in a public and extended circle, to witness those early displays of genius, and that gradual development of talents, afterwards so eminent for their usefulness or splendor, upon which the eye of a philosopher would love to dwell. This is usually the privilege of a few obscure individuals in some retired spot. The new fledged bird first tries its pinions in its own sequestered bower ere it soars above its native glen, and courts the admiration of man by the boldness of its flight, or the sweetness of its song. And yet there is such a peculiar interest connected with the early efforts of a mighty mind, and the first stages of an eminent career, that we gather with diligence all that can be gleaned respecting them, and listen with delight to the narration of those who were spectators. But few perhaps who have heard of Spencer, but would gladly be transported to the peaceful village of *Collier's End*, and mingle with the auditors under his first sermon there. And it requires no uncommon acquaintance with the principles of our nature, and the doctrine of association in the human mind, to predict, that the villages of *Halfway*, *Street*, and *Lewisham*, in Kent, will derive some celebrity in the religious world from having been the scenes of ministerial labor, when a youth, to a preacher, who for these twelve years past has held the delighted auditories of the metropolis the willing captives of his eloquence.* And surely such a principle as this, whilst in its gratification it yields an indescribable pleasure, may be cultivated to no small advantage. It banishes from the mind that despair of reaching it, which a contemplation of exalted eminence might inspire, by an assurance, that the object at which he aims is not unattainable, since its present possessor once occupied the same level with himself, and was attended by circumstances as unfavorable to his elevation as those which at present may encompass him.

* The reader who would be gratified with an outline of the course of study pursued in most of our dissenting colleges, may turn to the *Appendix, No. I.*

* The name of Doctor Collyer is too well known to derive any additional celebrity from being copied on a page my hand has written. And perhaps I may be censured for indulging in an allusion here which bears the least *appearance* of flattery. Far be it from me to cherish such a principle. The work in which I am engaged is sacred to friendship and to the memory of departed worth; and is it at all surprising, that whilst endeavoring to preserve the record of a friend removed by *death*, my memory should sometimes recur to the many excellencies which have so long endeared me to a friend from whom I am removed by *distance?*

Our amiable young preacher's first sermon excited a strong desire in his hearers for a repetition of his labors; and his fame rapidly circulating, produced an invitation also, from another quarter, for the following Sabbath. To these solicitations, we may suppose without much reluctance, he complied; and he preached again on the morning of July 12th, at a village called *Broughin.* His text on this occasion was Col. iii. 3, "*Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.*" In the afternoon and evening of the same day, he preached again at *Collier's End.* In the afternoon from Acts xix. 2, "*Have ye received the Holy Ghost?*" In the evening from Phil. iii. 18, "*They are the enemies of the cross of Christ.*" The attendance at *Collier's End* was, on this second Sabbath, so much increased, that the room would scarcely contain the people who were desirous of hearing, and every one seemed still more deeply affected by the impressive manner, the solemn doctrines, and the surprising powers of this young divine. On the following Thursday he preached again at a place called *Brickenden,* from John iv. 29, "*Come, see a man which told me all things that I ever did; is not this the Christ?*" On Sunday, July 19th, he again resumed his labors at *Collier's End,* and preached in the afternoon from 2 Chron. xxxiii. 12, 13, "*And when he was in affliction he besought the Lord, his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his father's and prayed unto him, and he was entreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem, and to his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the Lord he was God.*" In the evening the multitude that assembled was so great, that to gratify them all, he was under the necessity of preaching out of doors, which he did with great animation and effect, from Romans xiv. 12, "*So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.*" It appears from the report of one who was present at the delivery of this sermon, that it was remarkably impressive. Although surrounded by so great a crowd, he seemed quite undaunted, and expressed himself with an ease and an energy which produced the most serious impressions upon many, and excited the astonishment of all. To see the old and grey-headed melted into tears beneath the simple touches and fervent appeals of a youth, but little more than sixteen years of age, proclaiming with the boldness and propriety of an experienced veteran the glorious gospel of the blessed God, must have been truly interesting. And it is also gratifying to know, that by the earliest labors of this excellent youth, happy and saving effects were produced, which remain to this day. On the evening of Thursday, July 23d, he preached at *Buntingford,* a town about ten miles from Hertford, from John x. 9, "*By me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.*" On Sunday, July 26th, he preached again, afternoon and evening, at *Collier's End.* In the afternoon from John vi. 44, "*No man can come to me except the Father which sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.*" In the evening from 2d Tim. ii. 19, "*Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his, and let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.*" On the Wednesday evening following he preached at *Hormead,* from Psalm iv. 6, "*There be many that say, who will show us any good? Lord lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.*" And on the Thursday evening again at *Brickenden.* At *Hormead* his congregation amounted to six or seven hundred persons, and the place where they were assembled was a barn.* Indeed by this time his fame had so widely circulated, that wherever he preached, numbers flocked from all parts to hear and see this wonderful youth; and he might have preached every day in the week, had he been so inclined, so numerous were the invitations that crowded upon him. However, his vacation drew towards a close; and his return to Hoxton suspended for a while these public exercises. He preached on the evening of Sunday, Aug. 2d, at *Roydon;* and we hear no more of his preaching till December. It certainly admits of doubt, whether these early exercises in public preaching are beneficial or injurious. That they are injurious, may be argued from the circumstance, that they tend to elate and dissipate the mind—to inspire it with conceited notions of its own superior powers —too soon, alas! to familiarize the ear to the insinuating sounds of flattery, and, investing the youth with high conceptions of his present qualifications, to annihilate those humiliating views of his own ignorance and imperfection—and that ardent panting after knowledge in which lies the great source of respectability and usefulness in after life. Not to notice those practical errors into which the ignorance and incaution natural to youth may lead him, when engaged in directing men in affairs of infinite and eternal moment. If the aged evangelist —the venerable pastor, is heard so frequently to deplore his imperfection and lament the *possibility* of error in his public instructions—a young man may well proceed in his early labors with caution, and had need to be possessed of no common discretion and knowledge, to counteract the suspicions necessarily excited, in the breasts of the thoughtful, by his youth.

But perhaps, on the other hand, there are peculiar advantages connected with an early entrance on the work of preaching. The novelty of the circumstance excites attention, and many are converted, who, but for the juvenility of the preacher, had never heard the gospel from his lips, and this is doubtless amongst the many *means* which an Infinite Wisdom has selected, for accomplishing, in the conversion of sinners, the purposes of an infinite love. Besides that on the preacher's own mind, his early employment in ministerial labor may have a most happy influence. By an early initiation into the difficulties and trials of the work, he may attain an ease and a skill in its execution, which is perhaps but seldom reached by the man who has commenced much later in the day. In youth the mind is all activity, and difficulties which are met with then are far more easily surmounted than when they are presented to the opposition of maturer age. But after all, much depends upon the peculiar circum-

*The circumstance of Mr. Spencer's preaching in a *barn,* and in the *open air,* may perhaps excite unpleasant feelings in the breasts of some who, having occasionally heard him with delight, may honor these pages with a perusal. They may feel regret, perhaps, that he should ever have been so irregular, or have ever trodden in the steps of men, who are universally condemned as enthusiasts and fanatics. It is necessary, therefore, in order to vindicate him, and all who have been guilty of a similar offence against the laws of *ecclesiastical decorum,* from the charge of enthusiasm and fanaticism, to produce some passages of Scripture, by which their conduct, in this respect, is fully justified; "*Howbeit, the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands.*" Acts vii. 48. "*Where* (whether in a *field,* a *barn,* or a *temple,*) *two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.*" Mat. xviii. 20. "*Go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in.*" Luke xiv. 23. The most impressive sermon ever preached was delivered in the open air, upon a mount. And the wilderness of Judea was the scene of his ministry, who was honored to be the forerunner of the Messiah.

stances of the individual case. Many a man is better prepared for the work of the ministry at sixteen than others are at forty; and whilst the popularity and flattery which usually attend the course of youthful preachers would be the ruin of some, there are others indued with a prudence and a piety sufficient to resist their influence. And be it remembered, that the time allotted to every man for labor is at best but *short*, and that for many of our ministers—alas! that these should be, for the most part the most eminent and useful!—is prepared an early grave! To be squandering away the precious time which ought to be devoted to the salvation of immortal souls, in the acquisition of profound and extensive erudition; to be immured for years in the walls of a study, and confined to the precincts of a college, impairing the physical strength by midnight application, and smothering the flames of holy zeal amid the ices of metaphysics and the lumber of heathenish philosophy, whilst thousands of immortal souls are perishing, to whose eternal interest those years might be successfully devoted—is certainly a conduct highly culpable, and not in the spirit of Him who said—"*work whilst it is day, for the night cometh, when no man can work!*" Far be it from the writer of this volume in any way to undervalue or decry that knowledge, which, in a minister of the gospel, the circumstances of the present times render so essential. These remarks only apply to those cases in which years are expended in adding to a stock already more than sufficient for present purposes, without beginning to apply to any practical use that which is so largely possessed; and may affect such institutions as, having for their object the preparation of young men for the work of the ministry, suffer the zeal for God, and the love of souls, which led them to its patronage, at least to lose a little of its fire by years of dry scholastic disquisition, ere they are suffered to go forth into the world and expend them on their proper object—the conversion of their dying fellow men.

With respect to Mr. Spencer, the world will judge whether he began to preach too soon or not. I believe that Liverpool, by far the most competent to judge in this case, will, without hesitation, decide in the negative. Perhaps there are, who may be disposed to say, "this was an exception." Granted; but in such exceptions, let a similar liberty be allowed. Where extraordinary gifts, attended by extraordinary grace, so early develop themselves, allow them a proportionably early exercise, nor rob the church of God of an useful minister, who, ere the period a cautious policy has fixed for the commencement of his labor is arrived—may be summoned to his rest.

On his return to Hoxton we find Mr. Spencer preaching occasionally in the work-houses, an admirable school for young divines. Surely this is no inconsiderable circumstance in which our dissenting colleges are superior as schools of practical divinity, to those of the establishment. There the student emerges at once from the retirement of private life to all the publicity of the sacred office; which sudden transition, to a delicate mind, must often be attended with considerable pain, and may lead, in the first few instances, to a confusion and embarrassment most distressing to himself, and most unfriendly to his prospects of future respectability and usefulness. On the other hand, with us the student *gradually*, almost *imperceptibly*, glides into the ministry, and by continued, but slow enlargement, of the sphere in which he is allowed to move, he rises from a few poor people in a workhouse, to address the most respectable auditories.

On his return to his father's house, for the Christmas vacation, Mr. Spencer preached for the first time at Hertford. It did not happen to him, as is often the case, that he had no honor in his own country. Numbers pressed, urged no doubt, in the first instance, by curiosity to hear him; and those who are accustomed to mark the influence of similar circumstances upon a susceptible mind, will enter a little into his emotions, when rising to address, upon the most solemn of all subjects, a vast multitude of his fellow-townsmen, amongst whom he recognised many of his juvenile companions—the several members of his own family—and, not the least interesting object in the group, the venerable matron who had early instructed him in the principles of his mother tongue, and whose lot it was to observe the first faint dawnings of a talent, then fast hastening to its fullest exercise and strength. But long after the influence of novelty may be supposed to have subsided, he continued to excite the admiration of his native town. His first sermon at Hertford was preached on the evening of Sunday, December 20th, at the Rev. Mr. Maslin's chapel, from Eph. v. 11, "*And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness.*" He preached again on the Wednesday evening following, and on the evening of Christmas day, on which occasion his text was, Mich. v. 2. "*But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been of old, from everlasting.*"

The passages of Scripture selected by Mr. Spencer, as the subjects of his earliest discourses, afford another demonstration, in addition to many others, of the general bias of his mind. They are such as one may well imagine a preacher panting for the salvation of his fellow men, would select for the commencement of his public labors. The topics which they suggest are of all others the most solemn, as they are the most simple and the most important in the whole range of inspired truth, and hence they were best adapted to the preacher's age, and the unlettered character of his auditors. It seems, that in his earliest sermons there was nothing of that parade and glare—nothing of that excessive fondness of figures and love of imagery, which too often mark the first compositions of youthful preachers—preachers who, in a more advanced stage of their ministry, have not been less respectable or useful than he.

Whether this is to be considered as an excellence or defect, it is probable, with some, may be a matter of debate. Dr. Blair, (or rather Quintilian, from whom he copies,*) in his remarks on the early compositions of public speakers, urges in favor of that exuberance of imagination and excess of ornament—that time and experience will prune all this away, and in proportion as the fire of youth declines, the glare of the composition will sink into the settled lustre of maturer age. And hence he argues, for an excessive indulgence of the imagination at this period; since by the time the powers are called into full and steady exercise, they will have undergone a certain train of discipline, and have found their proper limits; but if the composition has all the judicious sobriety of that maturer age, amid the vigor and vivacity of youth, what is it likely to be in the more advanced stages of its exercise, but cold, insipid, and dull.

But surely all depends upon the nature of the subject, and the source whence the public orator is to draw the energy which must give animation to his discourses. The fire of genius, the glow of imagination, must be the enkindling torches in the

* Quintilian again quotes from Cicero, the great master of eloquence; whose remarks on this subject are worthy his immortal pen. Vid. Quint. Just. Orat. lib. 11. ch. 4. et Cicero de Orat. lib. 11. ch. 21

senate—at the bar; but though not altogether useless in the pulpit, yet they are not the lawful sources of animation there. It is not the blaze of genius, or the glow of imagination; but the sacred flame of fervent piety—the holy kindlings of a mind moved by principles derived from heaven, and the generous efforts of a soul impelled by an intense desire for the salvation of a dying world, that must impart life and energy to the correct, but glowing statements—the warm and empassioned appeals of the ambassador for Christ. Other sources of animation may be exhausted by exercise, and dried up by time; but this can never fail. It will remain the same when the head of the venerable prophet is covered with hoary hairs, and the body is sunk in the decrepitude of age. Nay, as in the case of the apostle Paul, it will rise into brighter radiance as he advances to the termination of his course—a more ardent panting for the salvation of mankind will mark his dying hours, than that which attended his entrance on his labors; and with David, the last prayer his spirit breathes will be for the universal diffusion of that gospel, which it has been the business and the honor of his life to preach—"*Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doth wondrous things. And blessed be his glorious name for ever; and let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and Amen.*"

We now arrive at a period in Mr. Spencer's history, peculiarly critical and important.—During the vacation of Christmas, 1807, the Rev. Mr. Liefchild, of Kensington, was supplying the pulpit at Hoxton chapel. One Sabbath afternoon, in January, Mr. Spencer being then returned to the academy from Hertford, Mr. L. expressed a wish that he should assist him, in the public service, by reading the Scriptures and engaging in prayer. The request was granted, and an extract of a letter obligingly addressed by that gentleman to me, will convey a lively picture of the deep impression which his appearance and manner produced upon the large congregation before whom he stood.

"—— But when he appeared in the pulpit—after the first emotions of surprise were over, and after the mistakes of some, who supposed that he was a little boy belonging to the gallery, who, from ignorance or thoughtlessless, had gone up the pulpit stairs, instead of those leading to his seat had been corrected, so sweetly did he read the chapter,* so earnestly, so scripturally, so experimentally, did he engage in prayer, that for the whole six Sabbaths afterwards he became the chief magnet of attraction to the place. The people now insisted upon it he should preach. I need not name his subsequent success."

The entreaties of the people having prevailed, Mr. Spencer, though contrary to the standing order of the institution, was allowed to preach. It was a delicate situation. Yet it was one to which he had long and anxiously aspired. Indeed, so strong was his desire for the public engagements of the ministry, that the fear of being long denied the gratification of his wishes, on account of his youth, actually preyed upon his spirits so severely as even to affect his health. But it was not from the love of fame or popular applause that he cherished this desire, but from the hope of being early and extensively useful;—as if urged by a presentiment of his impending fate—immediately to commence those honorable labors from which he was to be called so soon. When he appeared in the pulpit at Hoxton, a youth just seventeen years of age, he betrayed none of that distressing anxiety which marks the candidate for public approbation; but stood with all the dignified composure, and spoke with all the unembarrassed energy of an ambassador for Christ. His text was, Psalm xxxii. 6, "*For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found; surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto thee!*" At the close of his discourse, the sentiments which dwelt upon the lips and countenances of his auditors were those of pleasure, admiration, and surprise. His excessive youth—the simplicity of his appearance—the modest dignity of his manner—the sweetness of his voice—the weight and importance of his doctrine—and the force—the affection—and the fervor with which he directed it, to the hearts and consciences of those who heard him—charmed and delighted, whilst they edified. And retiring from the sanctuary to the social circle, they dwelt alternately on the loveliness of the preacher, and the importance of the truths which they had heard from his lips.

Upon this scene the Christian student may, with advantage, pause and meditate. Looking forward, perhaps with considerable apprehension, to the period of his public entrance on the labors of the ministry, he may be anxious to ascertain what was the secret spring—the hidden source, of that calm composure and unfettered boldness, which characterised the earliest addresses of this interesting youth. To such then I can confidently say—it was not the proud consciousness of superior powers—of erudition—of genius, or of eloquence; but it was the influence of a heart warmed with the love of Christ, big with the vast moment of his solemn theme, and panting with an ardor which no circumstances of difficulty could suppress, for the salvation of sinners. Such an influence as this will make the coward bold, and convert the most timid and feeble into valiant and successful champions of the cross. Before an influence like this, the love of fame—the glare of popularity, the opinions and the plaudits of mankind retire. No consideration remains but that of the worth of immortal souls, and the importance of their salvation. This, under the agency of the eternal Spirit, whose assistance every faithful minister may with confidence expect, will supply a closeness of appeal to arrest the attention—furnish topics of discourse to inform the judgment, and animated expostulations to warm the heart. When the blaze of genius and of oratory is extinguished, this will continue with a steady flame. And whilst many, his acknowledged superiors in talent and in literature, are left behind, the preacher in whose breast it glows will be conducted to scenes of extensive usefulness, and the enjoyment of an honorable renown.

Mr. Spencer now became the topic of general discourse—the subject of universal inquiry. His name spread far and wide. His danger became daily more and more imminent. Letters pressed upon him, filled with flattery—invitations arrived at the academy from all parts, for his services; and he appeared, as a friend, who witnessed his sudden and extraordinary elevation, observed, like one standing on the brow of a precipice, amid the most violent gusts of wind. Disapprobation cannot be expressed in terms too strong of the conduct which is usually adopted by the religious public towards their favorite, and especially their youthful preachers. And the censure which may, in a lamentable degree admit of universal application, falls with pre-eminent propriety on the professors of religion in the metropolis and its neighborhood. There, indeed, by the constant accession of fresh

* On the evening of the following Sunday, Mr. L. addressed young people; when Mr. Spencer again conducted the devotional part of the service. The chapter which he then read was Ecclesiastes xii. A person since received into the church at Hoxton, dated her first serious impressions from the reading of that chapter, and the solemn prayer then offered up.

objects, to the sphere in which they move, such a love of novelty—such a fondness of variety—such a taste for something perpetually original—is excited and constantly fed—that whatever is uniform and solid, in the ministry of their established and experienced pastors, while it secures the attention and regard of the judicious and discerning, is too often neglected as stale and insipid by the more *lively* and *enlightened* class of hearers. A new name is announced on the cover of a Magazine, or from the pulpit of some celebrated chapel, and thither the unstable multitude direct their steps. They sit in solemn judgment on the preacher's manner—his appearance—his action, and his voice; for amongst too many, alas! it is to be lamented, that the solemn truths which he delivers are but secondary objects of regard. If there should be nothing striking in his manner—nothing melodious in his voice—nothing singular in his appearance—nothing peculiar in his system—and nothing particularly favorable in the circumstances of his introduction to the pulpits of the metropolis, there he may continue his appointed period, and when it has expired, return to the peaceful village or the quiet town, where it is his lot to labor—

"The world forgetting—by the world forgot."

On the other hand, with this class of hearers the preacher who secures their admiration instantly becomes their idol. As if irresistibly impelled to extremes, they lavish on him the warmest eulogies and adulation, often too palpable to be endured. Forgetting that he is a man of like passions with themselves, they heap their honors on his head as though he could remain insensible to the plaudits they bestow, and perfectly superior to the influence of every principle of pride. The following lines of the inimitable Cowper too well express the sentiments which in these remarks must suggest themselves to every thinking mind, not to obtain insertion here:—

"O Popular Applause! what heart of man
Is proof against thy sweet seducing charms?
The wisest and the best feel urgent need
Of all their caution in thy gentlest gales;
But swell'd into a gust—who then, alas!
With all his canvass spread and inexpert,
And therefore heedless, can withstand thy power?
Praise from the rivell'd lips of worthless bald
Decrepitude, and in the looks of lean
And craving Poverty, and in the bow
Respectful of the smutch'd artificer,
Is oft too welcome, and may much disturb
The bias of the purpose. How much more
Pour'd forth by beauty splendid and polite,
In language soft as Adoration breathes?
Ah spare your idol! think him human still.
Charms he may have, but he has frailties too.
Dote not too much, nor spoil what ye admire."

But the preaching of Mr. Spencer, even in his earliest discourses, was not of that light and meretricious kind which may secure the temporary* admiration of the wandering and unsettled. It possessed much of the solid—the experimental, and judicious; and this secured him the attention and esteem of those, whose approbation any man would esteem it an honor to possess. But this only tended to heighten his danger. God, however, gave him grace equal to his day. His letters during his popularity in London breathe the same spirit of humility as that which marked his earlier correspondence; and a piety seldom surpassed in fervor and sincerity tended to preserve him steady in the midst of that tempestuous sea, upon whose billows, though young and inexperienced, it was his lot to ride.

Numerous and pressing however as were the invitations from different parts of the metropolis and its neighborhood, yet Mr. Spencer did not preach again in London (except in the work-houses, which the students regularly supplied, and also once in a small chapel in Hackney Road) until September. In the meanwhile his talent for preaching had ample exercise in various parts of the country, which during this period he was allowed to visit. So that, from January 7th to September 8th he preached no less than sixty times. The following are the principal places which were then favored with his labors:—*Royden*, *Godmanchester*, *Ripton*, *Buntingford*, *Hertford*, *Dorking*, *Rumford*, *Harlow*, *Royston*, *Hadham*, *Hays*, *Chigwell*, and *Mill-Hill*. At all these places the attention he excited was considerable, and the impression he left remains with the people to this day.*

Mr. Spencer's second sermon at Hoxton chapel was delivered on the evening of Thursday, September 8th. It confirmed the opinion of his excellence produced by the first. His text was, Acts x. 36. "*He is Lord of all.*"

The general sentiment of approbation and delight at first excited by his youthful appearance, and his extraordinary pulpit talents, was now deepened and established, and he began to preach pretty extensively in the pulpits of the metropolis and its neighborhood. On Sunday, September 18th, we find him in the pulpit at Holywell Mount chapel, and on the Sunday following, in that at Kennington chapel; and on the afternoon of Sunday, December 13th, he supplied the chapel in Old Gravel Lane, Wapping.† During the autumn of this year he also visited several parts of the country immediately surrounding London; and he preached, among other places, at *Upminster*, *Upsom*, *Guilford*, *Roydon*, and *High Wycombe*.

With respect to the wisdom and propriety of permitting such extensive public labors, in one so young, and at so early a stage of his academical course, there will be perhaps a diversity of opinion. On the *general* question, in which this is but an individual case, there can be but one sentiment. Nothing tends more to dissipate the mind, than much travelling and much society; and particularly injurious to the fixed and laborious habits of a student's life is that kind of intercourse with society, which the young minister, in his occasional visits, usually obtains. The esteem in which, for the most part the name of a minister is held, in the circles which

* I believe that general experience will justify the observation, that however attendant circumstances may contribute, in the first instance, to render an individual popular, nothing but sterling worth can secure its perpetuity; and whenever the preaching of a popular minister has endured, without injury to his reputation, the ordeal of a ten or twenty years trial, he may safely be regarded as possessing an excellence superior to any thing his *manner* could exhibit. But I feel the delicacy of the topic I have thus ventured to introduce, and gladly refer to illustrations of the same subject by more experienced and far abler hands.—*See Fuller's Life of Pearce; and Jay's Life of Cornelius Winter.* Books in which examples, the one of more public, the other of more retired, but not less transcendant excellence, seem to live before us for our instruction. To every student for the Christian ministry they must prove an invaluable treasure.

* For specimens of his early pulpit compositions, see Appendix No. II.

† The church assembling in Old Gravel Lane, formerly sat under the ministry of the late Rev. Noah Hill, but now enjoy the pastoral care of the Rev. Mr. Hooper, one of the tutors in the college at Hoxton.

he enters, secures him an attention and an ease by far too flattering not to be injurious; whilst the refined and fascinating manners of some societies but ill prepare the mind for the imperatively severe characters of academic life. But perhaps a far more serious object of regard is the time which is thus necessarily and irretrievably lost to the great and avowed object of his pursuit.—It is impossible to take a review of the past year of Mr. Spencer's life, and number up the several places at which he has preached—at some of them two or three times, whilst others he visited more than once, calculating their respective distances from Hoxton, and the time necessarily occupied in travelling, together with the many hours, perhaps days, which must have been consumed in preparing the discourses there delivered—without being struck with a conviction, of the immense loss which in a literary point of view he must have sustained; and the pursuit of literature is, after all, the professed object of our dissenting colleges. Considering too, that this was but Mr. Spencer's second year of study, and connecting this with the shortness of the term he had to stay, and his exceeding youth, the impression is yet deepened. But Mr. Spencer's was an extraordinary case. His *forte* was the composition and delivery of sermons. He was at home and happy only in this sacred work. He seemed but to live for this object. Other objects he might contemplate, with respect and even esteem, excited by an impression of their utility and excellence—on this his heart perpetualty dwelt with a fervent and impassioned love. It was evidently for this God had especially designed him; and for the work he had to accomplish, and the early account he had to render—all perhaps are now convinced that *he* was not suffered to begin too soon. For one whose day of usefulness has proved so short, and over whom the night of death so early and so suddenly has shed its gloom, we cannot but rejoice that the first dawn was devoted to his honorable labor, and not even a solitary hour neglected, from the commencement to the termination of his career.*

Mr. Spencer preached again at Hoxton chapel on Christmas day, morning and evening; and also delivered an address, on the following evening, at the prayer meeting. A day or two after he left London for *Brighton*, and preached his first sermon in that celebrated seat of gaiety and fashion on the evening of Thursday, December 29th, at the Countess of Huntingdon's chapel, from Zach. vi. 12, "*Behold the man whose name is the branch, and he shall build the temple of the Lord.*" On Sunday, 1st January, 1809, he preached in the afternoon at the Rev. Mr. Stiles' chapel, and again in the evening at the Countess'.

I am the more particular in marking the date of his first visit to Brighton, as it commences a new year, and forms also a most important epoch in his history. The interesting and endeared connections which he afterwards formed there, tend to throw a new and brilliant light upon his character; whilst they shed a softer air of melancholy around the circumstances of his early and lamented fate!†

Alas! of what moment to the Christian minister is the formation of connections such as these. Delicate as the subject may be, and ill qualified as I feel I am to enter fully into its discussion, I yet cannot suffer it to pass without some observations on its vast importance.—By imprudence here, how many have destroyed, if not their *character*, yet to an alarming extent their *usefulness* and *comfort*. Upon the partner which a minister selects, much of his happiness depends. He must be indeed a child of sorrow, who with a heart broken by disappointment, and a brow clouded by care—such cares and disappointments as too frequently impart a character of gloom to many a pious pastor's life—finds no relief in his domestic circle, and seeks in vain for the soothing influence of sympathy in the individual whom he has chosen to be a "*help meet for him.*"

The important subject thus reluctantly though unavoidably introduced, distributes itself into many branches, each interesting in its kind, on each of which, age and experience might with considerable propriety descant; and however unwilling I might be to enter more largely into the discussion, yet did I think myself sufficiently possessed of either, I would certainly reprobate in the severest terms that rash and thoughtless haste which too often marks the decision of students and youthful ministers in this respect, and which too frequently leads to settled distress—final ruin—or shameful infidelity! To the honor of Spencer be it recorded, that his choice in the first instance displayed his *wisdom:* his uniform attachment until death, his *constancy!*

Mr. Spencer preached again at the Countess of Huntingdon's chapel, at Brighton, on Thursday evening, January 5th, and left that place on the following day. On the ensuing Sunday he preached at Holloway, morning and afternoon; and on the evening of Tuesday the 10th, addressed an immense congregation from the pulpit of that truly excellent man, the Rev. Rowland Hill, at Surry chapel. The subject of his discourse was Deut. xxxiii. 3, "*Yea, he loved the people; all his saints are in thy hand, and they sat down at thy feet, every one shall receive of thy words!*"

Between this date and the following midsummer, his labors appear to have been, in point both of number and success, truly astonishing. He now preached much in and about London, and wherever his name was announced, the crowd that flocked to his ministry, proved how extensive and deep the impression was which it had excited. Besides occupying many of the most respectable pulpits in the metropolis, during this period, he visited and preached in the following places: Guilford, Epsom, Worthing, Barking, Roydon, Dorking, Buntingford, Winchmore-Hill, Saffron, Walden, and Hertford.

During his stay at Worthing, which was in the month of February, he made several excursions to Brighton, which became more endeared to him by every visit. The attachment was mutual. His ministry excited universal attention; multitudes pressed to hear him. The public prints declared their admiration of his powers; and the private circle forgot the trifling topics of the day, intent upon the discussion of his rare and extraordinary talents. More especially did he bind to him, in affectionate remembrance, the hearts of the young, by the warmth, simplicity, and affection of his addresses to them: and in no place which was honored by his labors, was his worth more fully appreciated in life, or his loss more deeply and universally lamented in death!

On the evening of Thursday, the 18th of May, he

* A contemplation of the facts connected with the interesting, but melancholy history of Spencer, may however, tend to show, that, whilst much preaching and much travelling are to be depreciated as evils, especially in the earlier stages of a student's course, yet that no specific rules can be established in this case for *universal* and *invariable* application. On the propriety of the thing, in every case of students under their care, the TUTORS are the best qualified to decide.

† Those who knew Spencer, will enter fully into the meaning of this paragraph. I owe it, however, to those who knew him not, to say, that tenderness to feelings I should dread to wound, compels me to draw a veil over one of the most interesting scenes of his life.

preached again at Hoxton chapel. His text on that occasion was Isaiah lxi. 10, "*I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness.*"

But by so much preaching and fatigue, his strength became exhausted, and his health impaired; and during the midsummer vacation, the committee superintending the stations of the preaching students, appointed him to spend some weeks at Dorking, in Surrey, where the labor was but small, the retirement deep, the country beautiful, and the air salubrious! To this place he went in the beginning of July—having first paid a visit to his family at Hertford, and preached again in his native town. At Dorking he was committed to the care of Mrs. Alexander, a kind and pious matron, whose hospitable attention to all the servants of Christ who have had the happiness to repose beneath her roof, renders her worthy of the appropriate epithet of "Mother in Israel." The praises of such pious women are, and ought to be, in all the churches. Happy is that congregation which possesses one or two such valuable and useful characters. To the youthful preachers who may be commissioned from their respective academies to labor for a while in the congregations to which they belong, they often prove an inestimable blessing. By their timely assiduities, not unfrequently, diseases the most serious and alarming may be averted, by which valuable ministers might have been early snatched from the church and from the world; and, at any rate, those little offices of unaffected kindness, in the performance of which they so much excel, will tend to soothe the anxieties by which, in early life, many a delicate frame is prematurely wasted and impaired!

For Spencer, too, the spot was admirably chosen. Nothing could better suit his fondness for retirement, and love of social or solitary walks. I am not a stranger to the scenery—I once visited it, like him, for relaxation; and the remembrance of those happy days, in a thousand pleasing pictures and enchanting forms, crowds at this moment on my mind. The country is sufficiently bold and varied to inspire with ideas of grandeur and magnificence, though not so romantic and vast, as to excite astonishment and terror. From the summit of abrupt and lofty hills, clothed with luxuriant foliage, the delighted eye may roam at leisure over woods and valleys, that will not yield in fruitfulness and beauty to the fairest plains of Italy; and in deep embowered glens, made cool and fragrant by meandering streams, the mind may yield to melancholy musings, and to solemn thought—so unbroken is the silence—so profound the solitude!*

During his stay at Dorking, it was his happiness to form a friendship the most intimate and endeared, with Mr. J. Haddon, of London; and on the return of that gentleman to town, Mr. Spencer began an epistolary correspondence with him, which continued till his death. A valuable assortment of these letters have been kindly put into my hands, and with the greater part of them I shall enrich these pages. The following is, I believe, the first in the series:—

XV.

TO MR. JOHN HADDON.

"*Dorking, July 25th,* 1809.

"My worthy friend—I know no other way of expressing the pleasure your letters and your society have afforded me, than by endeavoring to repay your kindness, or at least by showing you that I am sensible of the obligations under which I am laid by you. The pleasant interviews, the truly social walks, and the various other enjoyments which we experienced together, have left an impression of attachment to yourself on my mind, which I am persuaded will not be easily obliterated. The country is indeed as pleasant in itself now, as it was the week before last; yet, believe me, it is not half so much enjoyed by me as it was then. The same streams indeed glide pleasantly along—the same hills majestically rise—the same enlivening prospects strike the eye, and pervade the soul, with admiration—and every thing around me seems to say, '*'Tis Surrey still*;' but there is a sad deficiency in all my perambulations—it is, 'that I am all alone.'* Yesterday I went to Brockham; but there was no

* In one of these retired dells, where art has followed up the rude design of nature, a rustic temple, unadorned and simple as the genius of the place, affords to the weary wanderer its temporary rest. A grateful poet has left some tributary lines in honor of the scene, of which they are so descriptive, that I hope I shall be pardoned if I introduce them here:—

"Stranger, whensoe'r you come,
Welcome to this rustic dome;
Welcome to the hill—the glade;
Welcome to the forest shade.

To our simple, homely fare,
Come and welcome—banish care;
Climb our hills, and health inhale,
Borne upon the scented gale.

Bury in this wooded glen,
All the cares of busy men:
While the streams that round us roll,
Sweetly murmuring, soothe the soul!

See, the glorious orb of day
Gilds us with his parting ray;
Whilst above the woods afar
Sweetly shines the evening star.

Stranger, rest thee here awhile,
Till the morning sun shall smile,
Then explore the fairy scene,
Lovely as a waking dream.

Worn and wasted by disease,
Pale and languid—ill at ease,
Say, does health thy care employ—
Health, the fost'ring nurse of joy?

Come, and chase her on our hills;
Meet her by our purling rills;
Woo her mid our shadowing trees;
Catch her on the balmy breeze!

Health and peace, and joy are here;
Come and welcome—banish care—
Cease thy wand'rings—lose thy woes,
Yield to pleasure and repose."

* This is a quotation from a beautiful poem of Henry Kirke White's, to whose charming productions Spencer was most ardently attached. The poem itself so accurately describes the state of his own mind, and the melancholy musings in which he indulged, in his solitary walks, when deprived of the pleasure of his friend's society, that I need not apologize for its introduction here:—

SOLITUDE.

It is not that my lot is low,
That bids this silent tear to flow;
It is not grief that bids me moan,
It is, that I am all alone.

Haddon to meet me on my way thither, or to return with me any part of the way home. Last Tuesday evening Mr. Moore very politely offered to take me to Epsom, to hear Mr. Clayton the next day; which offer I most willingly accepted. On the whole, we had rather a pleasant day. Mr. George Clayton preached on Mat. xxi. 28. It may perhaps give you pleasure to hear, that I preached very comfortably last Lord's day from the new Bible, which is exactly the thing. I should know very little of the trials and difficulties of life, were I always to live as I now do. I really feel sometimes as if I needed something to quicken me to diligence, and put the graces of the Spirit in exercise, which, I am afraid, were I long to glide down life's stream so easily as I now do, would begin to die. Ease is a dangerous foe to the prosperity of religion in the soul, and opposition of some kind is essentially necessary for us who profess a religion which is described as a race to be run; as a battle to be fought, and which is represented to us by every metaphor which gives us the idea of active labor and unceasing exertion. I hope to have the happiness of frequently meeting with you after my return to town; and I have the pleasure to inform you, that my appointments favor such intention. Mr. Wilson has written to inform me that I shall preach in town for five Sabbaths after the vacation. The manuscripts you sent highly delight me. Mrs. Smith wishes me to leave Herbert with her, to which I know you will not object. I continue about the same in health as I was when you left me; and am very thankful that here I have not to preach so many times as at several other places. That the good will of Him who dwelleth in the bush may ever countenance and console you; that the divine Spirit may ever lead you into all the truth; that you may possess every evidence that you have found favor in the sight of the Lord; and that Christ Jesus may be your eternal portion, is my humble, earnest prayer. Let us hope hereafter to behold his face together, in a world where we shall be liable to change and separation no more, but where we shall be enclosed in glory, changeless as his own. This is the desire of one who can truly call himself,

"Your's most affectionately,

"THOMAS SPENCER."

"My kind hostess desires to be respectfully remembered to you. I expect I shall be in town next Tuesday."

Mr. Spencer left Dorking after the last Sabbath in July, and preached the six following Sundays in and about London. The places at which he labored during these six weeks were White-Row, Pell-street, Jewin-street, Camden chapel, Adelphi chapel, and Hoxton chapel. At Jewin-street he preached four Sabbaths, out of the six, afternoons and evenings. In the mean while his health still continued but indifferent, and indeed so much exertion both of mental and of physical strength was but ill calculated to promote its vigor. His mind, however, seemed every day to grow in activity and zeal. In the pulpit—in society, he was all animation and life. Like most who are the victims of much nervous irritability, his flow of spirits was excessive, which frequently led to ungenerous and merciless observations from those, who either had not the wisdom or the candor to attribute, what might appear as levity in him, to its real cause. It is indeed an unhappy circumstance, when such is the natural tendency of a man's mental constitution, and from nothing perhaps have young ministers suffered more than from this. At the same time, it is a shame and scandal to the Christian world, that there should be so many, who, professing to be the friends of students and youthful preachers, encourage and excite this unhappy bias, for their own amusement, and are then the first to censure the youth they have betrayed!

But where such is the *natural* disposition of a pious and devoted mind, its exercise in company is often followed by the keenest anguish and the deepest melancholy, in hours of solitude and reflection. The severe and malignant censurer should remember, that he is not omnipresent; and that there may be scenes in the retired life of the character he injures, which would put him to the blush! These remarks have been suggested by some passages in the following letter.

XVI.

TO MR. JOHN HADDON.

"*Hoxton, August* 15, 1809.

"MY DEAR FRIEND—I am sorry to inform you, that it is not in my power to gratify yourself, to please our friends, or to fulfil my own wishes, by devoting any evening in the week to visiting. I really cannot do it. My engagements this week are such as peremptorily to require my continuance at home, most likely till Sabbath day, at any rate till Saturday afternoon. I am obliged to those kind friends who expressed their concern about my exertions. I feel that I am not worthy of their sympathy. May their compassion lead them to pray for me, that I may be strengthened with all might by

---

In woods and glens I love to roam,
When the tir'd hedger hies him home;
Or by the wood-land pool to rest,
When pale the star looks on its breast.

Yet when the silent ev'ning sighs,
With hallow'd airs and symphonies,
My spirit takes another tone,
And sighs that it is all alone.

The autumn leaf is sear and dead,
It floats upon the water's bed;
I would not be a leaf to die
Without recording sorrow's sigh.

The woods and winds with sullen wail,
Tell all the same unvaried tale;
I've none to smile when I am free,
And when I sigh, to sigh with me!

Yet in my dreams a form I view,
That thinks on me, and loves me too:
I start, and when the vision's flown,
I weep that I am all alone.

To these mild complainings of this sainted bard, a reply, characterized by the same tenderness of thought and elegance of expression, has been furnished by the pen of Mr. Josiah Conder, of London:—

ON READING THE POEM ON SOLITUDE,
In the second volume of H. K. White's Remains.

But art thou thus indeed alone?
Quite unbefriended—all unknown?
And hast thou then His name forgot,
Who form'd thy frame and fix'd thy lot!

Is not his voice in evening's gale?
Beams not with him the star so pale!
Is there a leaf can fade and die,
Unnotic'd by his watchful eye?

Each fluttering hope, each anxious fear-
Each lonely sigh, each silent tear,
To thine Almighty Friend is known:
And says't thou, thou art "all alone!"

the Spirit in my inner man; and that He whose pleasure it is to increase strength to those that have no might, would help the infirmities of one who is weaker than a bruised reed, and yet has undertaken an office, to the discharge of which an angel is incompetent. My health is certainly in a better condition than it has been, but I am afraid I am still far from well: my head frequently aches, and I feel a sickness in my stomach. These are some of the miseries that flesh is heir to; but it is a joyful thought, that in the kingdom of glory our bodies will be no longer susceptible of pain, nor our minds of disquietude. Perfect health, composure, and joy, will be our happy lot when we see each other in a better world. And can we not hope that we shall do this; and that for ever we shall adore our common Saviour together? The leadings of his providence first brought us acquainted with each other; and the methods of his grace will, I hope, lead us on to glory, and in our way thither make us helps to each other. Pray for *me*, that my diligence may be excited; my levities checked; and my spirituality promoted. After all I say against the the world, I must confess with shame that I am very like many of the men of the world in this respect; that I indulge in a lightness of disposition which is inconsistent with the character of a Christian, and makes us resemble those who never think of eternity and the solemnities of religion. Ah! my dear friend and brother, I have experienced in my short life many a bitter hour, occasioned by my own folly in this respect. But what a scandal is it to a professing Christian, that natural dispositions and surrounding temptations should overcome a principle of grace in the heart—a principle which ought ever to operate powerfully in weaning us from folly, and making us every day more and more serious and holy. Never do you be afraid of cautioning, or reproving me, but give me opportunity to prove that '*Faithful are the words of a friend!*' I have felt more, in reference to yourself, than I have ever yet expressed. More affection for you; more gratitude that Providence placed you in my way; and more determination to make you my counsellor and friend—than I have ever yet told you. The Lord help us to strengthen each other's hands in his good ways. I shall not like your letters so well if you do not direct them yourself. This you will say is folly, but I cannot help it. Adieu!

"Your's affectionately,

"THOMAS SPENCER."

"N. B. Saturday afternoon, if possible, I will see you."

The history of the following month is from the pen of his most intimate friend.

"At his return (from Dorking) he supplied Jewin-street meeting for a month, in the afternoons and evenings, where the attention he excited will not be easily forgotten. Before he left, numbers could not get admittance. The church were very anxious that he should settle among them,* but their desire could not be complied with. I have heard him blamed respecting that business; but it was only by those who did not know the circumstances of the case. I was in the possession of his heart in that affair, and it would be unjust to his memory not to declare, that he was free from blame. His affectionate spirit keenly felt for them in their disappointment. 'The good people at Jewin-street,' said he, in a letter to me, 'have a strong claim upon our prayers;' and it was to sooth their minds that he composed his sermon upon Isaiah xxxiii. 20. The time of his supplying at Jewin-street, was very pleasant to me. I claimed the whole of his time between and after the services, which inclined him to enjoy that retirement which was so congenial to his lowly soul. When going to preach no one saw him. I used to knock at his door—give in his refreshment—and watch the time for him. It was from the mount of communion that he always went to the pulpit, and this caused his sermons to shine gloriously. Frequently in passing to the house of God we kept perfect silence, while his mind has been so entirely absorbed, that I have found a necessity for guiding him; and after worship he loved to stop as long as he conveniently could, that he might pass away unnoticed. But such was the character of Spencer—his deep humility—fervent piety—and amiable simplicity, that I am fully convinced it cannot be fairly stated without suspicion of exaggeration; and I must confess, that I should have found great difficulty in giving fallen nature credit for the excellencies, which, from the closest inspection I saw resident in that truly illustrious and holy youth."

The following letter, written on the Saturday previous to the last Sabbath of his supplying Jewin-street chapel, discloses his feelings with respect to the church in that place, and will prove to the people with how much affection he wrote and thought of them. Nor will it be less valuable for the spirit of filial love and duty which it breathes.

XVII.

TO MR. JOHN HADDON.

September 2, 1809.

"MY DEAR FRIEND—Truly sorry am I in any case to disappoint you, and yet it must be so as it respects this evening. Before seven o'clock I am necessitated to go from home, nor can I return till late in the evening. You ask, 'can you not give up this engagement?' I answer, this is impossible; because nothing short of *filial* duty is the cause of my absence from home. This morning I received a letter from my dear father, telling me that he must be in town to-day, although he has been travelling in the country all the week, and he wishes me to meet him this evening, at half-past six o'clock. This, I am sure will be regarded as a sufficient reason by you, and nothing short of such a reason could induce me to go out at all this evening, for to tell you the truth, I am very unwell. My head and my side have suffered exceedingly for a day or two past, more especially to-day. Nor are my prospects of the morrow of the most enlivening kind. In fact, too, my spirits are very low. The sight of my aged parent may perhaps revive them, and make '*my heart rejoice, even mine!*' Mr. W. has just told me, that he has informed Mr. S. that I cannot supply them any longer than to-morrow. The opinion of the committee, &c. goes against them! For my part, I can only say, '*My God, thy will be done!*' You will see me at Jewin-street in the afternoon, but whether able or incapacitated to perform my duty there, I know not. Pray for me, that much grace may communicate to me sufficient strength.

"Whether well or ill, cheerful or melancholy, I am yours affectionately,

"THOMAS SPENCER."

Having completed his engagements at Jewin-street, Spencer's labors became again miscellaneous and widely diffused. On Sabbath day the 17th, he preached at Roydon, a village near Hertford, when he availed himself of the opportunity which this appointment afforded him of visiting his family. I cannot but conceive the bliss which such occasional interviews would cause in that little circle, which

* The church was then under the pastoral care of the Rev. Timothy Priestly, a truly venerable divine, whose age and infirmities rendered the aid of a colleague necessary.

had once the happiness to call him theirs. To them the recollection of those happy hours devoted to social or sacred intercourse with their departed friend, must yield a soothing, though a melancholy pleasure. Nor is the reflection less honorable to his memory, than it is consolatory to their minds. In the midst of the unbounded popularity which he enjoyed—surrounded by new and splendid connections—the admiration of listening crowds, each eager to express his approbation—all ambitious of his friendship—he ever thought with the warmest affection upon those whom he had left in that obscurity from which he had himself emerged. Gladly did he seize the opportunity, when it occurred, of retiring from the public eye to taste again the tranquil pleasures of his home, and enjoy the interchange of all those sacred and delightful feelings which strengthen and endear the ties and obligations of social or domestic life. He was not unduly elated by his popularity. In his new associations he did not forget his kindred and his father's house. His family did not sink in his regard, in proportion as he rose to eminence. The voice of universal praise did not drown the milder whispers of paternal love. But in a heart whose best affections were devoted to the noblest objects, and to which new scenes of exertion were perpetually unfolding, the family at Hertford held an honorable and distinguished place. The most extensive public engagements, are not incompatible with the retired duties of private life—and the cares and responsibilities of the most laborious ministry may be sustained and discharged, without absorbing those affectionate regards so justly claimed by parental kindness and fraternal love. 'Tis true, that as a Christian, and in his official capacity, every believer in Jesus is to the faithful minister a father—a mother—a sister—and a brother. But as a *man* the relations of life exist for him—and the feelings of humanity must be common to him too. A heart from which these ties are rudely severed—is but ill adapted to that soothing influence by which the office of the ministry becomes a source of comfort to the wretched;—and a man whose bosom is a stranger to the tender sympathies of human life—alike insensible to joy or sorrow—may with propriety administer the cold rites of a Stoical philosophy—but must ever be a living contrast to the religion of Jesus—a system whose characteristic spirit is that of the purest and tenderest philanthropy.

Before his departure for Roydon, the following letter was addressed by Mr. Spencer to his friend. The observations at the beginning upon Christian boldness are judicious—and, though ignorant of the particular circumstances which might have called them forth, cannot fail to prove interesting and instructive.

XVIII.

TO MR. JOHN HADDON.

Thursday evening, September 14, 1809.

"My dear friend—I know you wish me to write you a great deal; but I must plead the old excuse—want of time; for I find that ———, instead of calling to-morrow morning, must have this directly, and I have but this minute left the chapel. You tell me your 'mind recoils from public duty, however plain and clear,' and you need not be told that this is a pity; and in this respect you do not display that Christian boldness which is after all consistent with genuine humility—which the apostles displayed and enforced—which the Bible every where recommends—and which is well calculated to evidence our decided attachment to Jesus and his cause. It shall be my part, however, not to reproach you for the want of it, but to carry your wants before our Father's throne, and entreat him to fill you with all holy boldness and Christian courage; whilst at the same time I would most earnestly entreat you to consider the foolishness of your fears: the little need we have to seek to please our fellow-creatures, or to dread them, and above all the constant inspection of Him who said, *whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of Man also confess before his holy angels.* But I am persuaded that you are *not* ashamed of Jesus; yet there is great need for us all to ask ourselves repeatedly, 'am I fully on the Lord's side?' because this very examination itself produces the best effects, as it prompts us to give evidence before others of the reality of our hope, and it brings us near to God, who can make us strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and faithful even unto death. Your letters always affect me; your company you know delights me; and what shall I say of your attachment to me, but *that it meets return.* I am often indeed induced to believe that you are too careful of me, and too much concerned about me. Expressions of gratitude on my part from my mouth or pen I know you do not want, therefore I shall not trouble you with them. My mind is perfectly at ease about the present or future laws of the house, as well as about any situation after I have filled it. O that I may be stayed on God! I often think what a pity it will be, if from our friendship there should arise no good effect; however, here I am wrong, because I am myself a witness that good effects have arisen to *me;* but I long that to us there may be opened fresh sources of comfort and joy in God, and that we may then be made abundant blessings to each other. I am going to preach next Sabbath at Roydon, a village near Hertford, where I have reason to hope God has owned and blessed my unworthy labors before. May he do so again. Perhaps I may go to Hertford to-morrow afternoon, as it was the place of my nativity, and is now the residence of my dear father, my sisters, brother, and mother-in-law. I could say much more, (though in the same feeble and desultory style) but you perceive my paper is full. I cannot expect to see you at all till Tuesday. The coach comes in town on Monday evening, about half past six. If I can, I will walk then to Fleet-street.

"Adieu, my dear friend,

"Thomas Spencer."

From this period to that of his first visit to Liverpool, I am not in possession of any remarkable occurrences in Mr. Spencer's history. At any rate, I am aware of none which tend to illustrate any particular feature of his character, or of such a nature as to warrant their publication to the world. But there yet remain many interesting letters to his friend, Mr. Haddon, which will tend very much to supply the want of a connected narrative—and that friend who during this period, enjoyed the most intimate acquaintance with him—and obtained a most accurate knowledge of his character, has furnished me with a series of anecdotes and observations, which will make the reader familiar with the man, and most strikingly exhibit the holy, humble, and fervent bias of his mind. For the present I shall content myself with making a selection from these letters, with such occasional remarks as may be necessary to illustrate their subjects or occasions; whilst the characteristic sketches above alluded to, will occupy some of the succeeding pages.

XIX.

TO MR. JOHN HADDON.

Hoxton, Oct. 12, 1809.

"My dear friend—With pleasure it is that I inform you, that I am appointed for *Vauxhall.*

I feel pleasure, because this assignation gives us another opportunity of enjoying each other's society. I have not yet written to those friends in the country, but intend doing it to-morrow. May the young lady die in such a peaceful and happy state of mind, as shall, instead of suffering the survivors to sorrow as those who have no hope, rather give them to say —*Behold how he lored her!* I mentioned the circumstance to Mr. W. at the same time stating the wish of the Roydon people that I might supply them on Sabbath day. He told me it could not be complied with, assigning as a reason, that I was given out at Vauxhall. As the affair now stands, I am quite satisfied, because I wish to resolve all my appointments into the will of the Head of the Church.—'Where he appoints, I'll go.' Of all evils, I pray to be particularly delivered from leaning to my own understanding, and indulging my own wayward will. May obstinacy never characterize me. May grace always be given me to suppress it when it rises. To these requests I know, that from your inmost soul you say *Amen*. One of our fellow students has just delivered us a good sermon from—'*The righteous hath hope in his death.*' I enjoyed his sermon much more than I generally do those which are delivered to us on a Thursday evening. This was so experimental—so scriptural—so pious, that it found its way to my heart. May you and I, whenever we shall come to die, have a lively, a sure, and a certain hope of reigning in life by Jesus Christ. Whilst so many are called away around us, surely we should recollect the uncertainty of our own continuance upon earth; and as death is still potent, still inexorable, and still delights to surprise, let it be our chief concern to have an interest in the affections of the heart of that Saviour, who shall destroy this last enemy, and give to his followers a crown of glory changeless as his own. On him may we now both live by faith, that so when we have served our generation according to his will, we may fall asleep in his arms.

"Adieu! Your's affectionately,

"THOMAS SPENCER."

The young lady to whom he refers in this letter, appears to have been one of the seals of his early ministry, and then at the point of death. One of the letters written by him on that occasion, I am able to lay before the reader.

XX.

TO MRS. ———

"DEAR MADAM—Both your letters were safely and joyfully received by me. I say joyfully, because they show that God is putting honor upon my feeble and unworthy labors, and making use of them for your spiritual welfare—a circumstance that gives me more real pleasure than any other circumstance possibly could. You are much mistaken in supposing that I neglected to write to you, because you had in your letters said any thing improper; nothing could be more opposite to my ideas. Had this been the case, I should have felt it my duty to have set you right: but I can tell you what I can tell my God, when I say that I never heard or read an account of a young convert which appeared more satisfactory, or filled me with more delight, than that which you give me of yourself. I say this not to puff you up with spiritual pride, but to make you more thankful that you have obtained mercy, and to assure you that your suspicions of any dissatisfaction on my part are altogether groundless. Rather would I exclaim, '*what hath God wrought!*' and wrought too (well may I wonder) by his blessing upon my weak exertions. Oh! let the glory be ascribed to Him who gives testimony to the word of his grace. The excuse I have to plead for not writing to you before, is want of time and multiplicity of engagements—for in the academy my time is not my own. I have just been writing a long letter to Mrs. W———, stating my views, wishes and hopes, for the welfare of her amiable and beloved daughter. May she be resigned to the Divine will, and ready when the heavenly bridegroom cometh! From all that I can learn, I have no doubt of her interest in the affections of that same Jesus who is now, I trust, all *your* salvation and all *your* desire. When I recollect that she, a seal to my ministry, is apparently going to join the heavenly musicians in singing that song which no man can learn but the redeemed, it is impossible to express my feelings. I am very desirous to hear from her own lips an account of the way in which the Lord met with her, and a statement of the sensations of her mind in prospect of the last conflict. I wished to come down to see her —I asked permission. This could not be granted me, because I was given out last Sabbath day at the place to which I am going. But I have the happiness of informing you, that the next Lord's day I shall preach at Roydon, and so shall have an opportunity of going to Thundridge Bury Farm. I hope that our covenant God is leading you in a plain path, and teaching you more of the corruption of your own heart and the love of Christ, by his holy Spirit. All I can recommend you to do is, to be much engaged in secret prayer to him. Oh! aim to get near to him in holy communion, then you will find a heaven begun below. You will have Christ for your constant companion, and you will obtain the desire of your heart. I view this as the time of your first love. May the zealous affection for Christ which I hope you now discover, increase yet more and more. Live by faith upon the Son of God, who loved you, and gave himself for you. Commit your soul into his hands, and the souls of all the members of your family. It is my earnest prayer, that you may grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; that so I may have to rejoice that you received the gospel when delivered by me, as in deed and in truth the word of God and not of man. As for your request about a settlement for me at Roydon, I should recommend you not to expect it. I am always happy to come amongst you as an occasional supply, but I must venture no further. I have a variety of reasons for not considering it my duty to settle with any congregation as yet, or even to think of it, and I have thus far not engaged to do so at Roydon. Therefore I must request you not merely to check, but actually to eradicate the thought. Wishing you —your respected partner—and all your family, the best of blessings, I remain

"Your's sincerely,

"THOMAS SPENCER."

Had he then been sufficiently advanced in his studies to have cherished the idea of an immediate settlement—and had he been left to the free, unbiassed expression of his feelings—there is no spot on which he would have fixed as the scene of his stated and pastoral labors, in preference to a village so tranquil and retired as Roydon. He did not value popularity, except as it afforded him an opportunity of doing good. No one ever was more averse to pomp or to parade. He loved simplicity in all its forms. It was indeed a characteristic feature of himself; and had not the prospect of more extensive usefulness allured him to a wider and more public sphere, his passion for retirement would have guided him in his selection of a residence for life.

Talking with him on the subject of his health, which seemed declining, beneath the pressure of so much exertion, his friend said—"Do you wish to be early laid aside—or do you desire a premature grave?" "Oh no," said he, "you know my wish—

to have a meeting in the country, surrounded by trees—occasionally to see the shadows of the leaves quivering on the walls, in the reflection of the setting sun. A burial ground near, in which I and my people can together lie!* To live a long, honorable, and useful life, bringing many souls to the Saviour! This is the summit of my wishes." Though it was denied him to enjoy the *first*, the *last* object of his desire, and by far the most important and dearest to his heart, he did possess; for never was so short a ministry honored by the conversion of so many souls. Every week in Liverpool discloses some fresh instances of its success—and one and another is perpetually rising up to say —"'By the grace of God I am what I am,' but it was the ministry of Spencer that led me first a humble suppliant to the throne of mercy."

The situation of young ministers is peculiarly delicate and dangerous. The eyes not only of the religious public, but also of the world are fixed on them. And it is to be deplored, that where they have a right to expect the greatest kindness, they often meet with an undue severity; and those who ought to be the first to throw the mantle of love over their defects, are not unfrequently the most forward and exulting in their exposure. To an unhappy and inordinate love of scandal, many a fair and unblemished reputation has fallen the victim. The scattered wrecks by which they are surrounded, should inspire succeeding voyagers with caution. There is a cheerfulness, compatible with the deepest seriousness—the most fervent piety; and there is a levity, in which the dignity of the minister and the sanctity of the Christian, may alike be lost. Where this is witnessed, whatever claim the individual may have upon the *generosity* and *lenity* of the spectators, he has none upon their *justice*—they have a right to censure—and however we may deprecate their severity—none can deny them its exercise. And here it is perhaps that students are most exposed to danger. Fatigued and wasted by the close application and intense thought of many studious weeks, they enter, as they imagine, the circle of friendship, and instantly relax. Those who only see the effect, and are unacquainted with its cause, hastily form an unfavorable opinion of their character, and cruelly propagate the opinion they have rashly formed.† These observations are not altogether inappropriate to the subject of the following letter.

* May I be indulged in another extract from the poems of Kirke White? It was a passage which Spencer often read with peculiar emphasis, and seems a melancholy comment on his own ideas.

"Beneath this yew, I would be sepulchred.
It is a lovely spot! The sultry sun,
From his meridian height, endeavors vainly
To pierce the shadowy foliage;"
"'Tis a nook
Most pleasant."

"Yet may not undistinguish'd be my grave:
But there at eve may some congenial soul
Duly resort, and shed a pious tear,
The good man's benison—no more I ask.
And oh! (if heavenly beings may look down,
From where, with Cherubim inspir'd, they sit,
Upon this little dim discover'd spot,
The earth,) then will I cast a glance *below*
On him who thus my ashes shall embalm."

"Wishing he may not long be doom'd to pine
In this low-thoughted world of darkling wo;
But that, ere long, he reach his kindred skies."

† I remember a case in point upon this subject—the mention of which may not be useless. A student from one of our academies had been spending some days with a pious and intelligent gentleman in the country, who was in the habit of having the servants of Christ beneath his hospitable roof. On his departure, the gentleman accompanied his guest some miles on his road, and in the course of conversation said—"I cannot forbear expressing to you, sir, the satisfaction which I have enjoyed in your society. I must confess that I have been too often grieved by the levity of students, whom yet I have highly valued; but whilst *you* have displayed a cheerfulness which has enlivened our circle, you have preserved a uniform respect to your sacred office, which has secured the esteem and admiration of us all."

XXI.

TO MR. JOHN HADDON.

Hoxton college, Oct. 27, 1809.

"My dear friend—The expressions of affection your last letter, all your letters, and the whole strain of your conduct towards me evince, greatly affect me, and you will find my feelings upon the subject in Prov. xxvii. 19. Sanctified friendship appears to me to be one of the best sweets in the cup of life. It is what the Saviour recommended by his own example, and what the best of men have experienced beneficial in every age. May this kind of friendship be exemplified in us, and may we mutually share in the affections of the heart of Him, who, "*having loved his own which were in the world, loved them unto the end!*" To his will in all things we must bow, and in his dispensations, however contrary to our inclination, acquiesce; but "*not my will but thine be done,*" is language which requires a large degree of grace to use in all cases, and from the bottom of our hearts.

"Many eyes are indeed upon *me*, and much do I fear that they will see something in me ere long that will take them from me. Your warnings are faithful, but my heart is still deceitful, and Satan may, for any thing I know, be about to sift me as wheat. You are not ignorant of his devices. Oh! then, pray for me, that my faith fail not, so that, instead of the number of those who behold me, turning away from me with disgust and aversion, they may rather glorify God in me, and take knowledge of me that I have been with Jesus. The thought that affords me some degree of encouragement, is that Jehovah knoweth my path, and that *he is able to make me stand*, yea to remove the suspicions of those who '*fear and wait to see.*' But really I cannot help thinking that there are some people in the world who seem as if they wished for something to hinder one's usefulness; and who by their too significant expressions on the subject, lead me to suppose that they would rejoice in such a circumstance, and say, 'Oh! so would we have it.' And why? Because then their clever prophecies would be fulfilled, and we should for the future put such confidence in their forebodings as to view them as certain omens of ill events. I do hope, however, that God will in great mercy either keep me from the snares that lie in my way, or take me to himself.

"I have to-day written to the Kidderminster people, referring them to the Doctor, or Mr. Wilson. I will try and be with you to-morrow by 12 o'clock Do not be disappointed if I should not be able.

"I remain yours affectionately,
"Thomas Spencer."

On Sunday, the 5th of November, he was appointed to preach at Cambridge, in the pulpit lately occupied by the Rev. Robert Hall, A. M. a name dear to genius, as to religion. The day following, he

spent in viewing the University. In a letter dated the 3d, he says, "last night my surprise was excited by seeing that I am not appointed on the list for any place in town, but for *Cambridge*. I am to stay Monday over at Cambridge, to look at the colleges, &c. I shall think much of Kirke White;" and aware of the respectability, both in wealth and talent, of the congregation he was called to address, he adds, "the Lord make me prudent and faithful; may it appear that he has some good end to answer by conducting me thither."

He was exceedingly attached to the poetry of Henry Kirke White. He could repeat a great part of it, and frequently quoted it with great emphasis and feeling. "And yet," said he in conversation with the friend to whom these letters are addressed, "there is a thirst for fame sometimes discovered, which pains me.

'Fifty years hence, and who will hear of Henry.'

Well, suppose *nobody* does, and what then? If Henry has served his day and generation, and is gone to glory, neither the church nor he will be losers; and the hearing of Henry will be too small a consideration to be brought into the account."

Public as Spencer's life had now become, and exposed as he was to the influence of every unholy passion which popularity might awaken, he yet maintained a close and holy walk with God. He courted solitude, and for the best of purposes. Of him it may be truly said, '*his fellowship was with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.*' The holy and the heavenly tone his mind received in those retired hours, gave a peculiar unction to his ministry; and the knowledge which by deep communion with his own heart, and constant intercourse with God, he had obtained, rendered his preaching remarkably profitable to believers, and gave him a skill in administering instructions adapted to all the varieties of their experience. Of this the following is a pleasing specimen.

XXII.

TO MR. JOHN HADDON.

November 9, 1809.

"My dear friend—Be assured that I, as well as yourself, have walked in darkness, and complained that there was no light. Fluctuations in experience are, I am sure, my lot, whilst my only consolation in such circumstances still remain—'tis the unchangeableness of Christ. Oh! what is so calculated to reconcile our minds to the way our Father calls us to travel, as the recollection, that whilst we are found in it, Jesus is the same, and that to the end of the journey; and in every trying circumstance he is a present help. In darkness he will enable us to trust in the Lord, and to stay ourselves upon our God; yea he will cheer our desponding souls with visitation sweet. Seasons in which we experience darkness of mind, and depression of soul, are necessary: they form the analogy between us and those who through *tribulation* are gone to heaven: they render us fit subjects for the illuminating and refreshing grace of Christ; they add a higher relish to the renewed enjoyment of the light and liberty of the gospel; and they serve to prepare us for that world where the Lord shall be our everlasting life, and our God our glory.

"Reflecting upon deliverance from such times of depression should teach us to say—'*Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee!*' It should lead us to anticipate future favors, and rejoice that he that hath delivered us, can and will deliver; and since the day has dawned, and the shadows have fled away, we should most cordially adore Him who has been appointed to give light to them who sit in darkness, and to guide our feet into the way of peace. May you and I ever enjoy the presence of Jesus, our best friend; share in his tender sympathy; his kind reproofs; his excellent counsels. May he be our God for ever and ever, and our guide even unto death. Then we need fear no evil. If sensible that he is with us, we may pass through midnight glooms, and experience a season of great darkness, and yet look forward to a future time, when with pleasure we shall sing, '*The Lord is my light, of whom shall I be afraid.*' Oh! that I may be enabled to commit your soul and my own into the hands of Jesus as unto a faithful Creator. I can now add no more, than to say that

"I remain affectionately yours,

"Thomas Spencer."

The next letter furnishes another proof of his humility and diffidence. It was written the day before it became his turn to preach again in the chapel at Hoxton, the Thursday evening lecture, which the tutors usually attend.

XXIII.

TO MR. HADDON.

December 6, 1809.

"My dear friend—I am sensible that Mr. S.'s politeness '*merits*' much of us, and if I must name some day for us to meet there, it must be Monday next. This we will speak of to-morrow evening. I am sorry you have been so busy about so worthless an object as myself. I need not say, pray especially for me, that a divine blessing may attend me to-morrow evening in preaching before those whom you know I too much dread as hearers. 'The Lord grant unto his servant, that with all boldness he may speak his word.' I trust your desire and expectation of obtaining good on Friday evening will be gratified. My mind is rather more composed than it has ever been before, when I have had to preach here on the Thursday evening. How it will be when the time comes, I know not. Many eyes are upon me, and different, very different are the feelings with which my brethren hear *me*. But if the Head of the Church gives each of them a blessing, they will, I hope, be satisfied.

"Your's affectionately,

"Thomas Spencer."

It is indeed much to be regretted, that any feelings but those of mutual affection, forbearance and candor, should be cherished in the hearts of brethren—and such surely are the students in the same academy. But in the present imperfect state of our nature, it must be expected, that superior excellence, while it is the object of universal admiration abroad, will, in too many instances, be exposed to the malignant glance of envy and of jealousy at home.—And when the scourge of criticism is supplied with knots by these, who but must expect to smart beneath its strokes. It is certainly to the honor of the institution to which Mr. Spencer belonged, that its members for the most part knew, admired, and confessed his worth:—and if there were any exceptions—let them remain in that oblivion in which is their best security.* But the solemn admonition of his early death, should tend to check the bitter exercise of that unhallowed sarcasm by which the rise of ex-

* "Those who admire and cherish rising talent, can have no bitter reflections when they contemplate the grave of Spencer. They hailed his entrance into public life, and strengthened his hands by their prayers and their approbation. Those who could envy him, and such I know there were, must be covered with

traordinary usefulness or genius is too frequently assailed. In academies of religion and literature, where the avowed object of every student is, not his individual advancement, but the glory of God, a spirit of detraction and envy ought to be unknown. The most devoted and useful, should be most esteemed. Every private interest should be lost in the general welfare of the church of Christ. One may behold, indeed, with less concern, the strokes of satire when they fall upon the arrogant, the presumptuous and the vain:—but when talents are attended by humility—when popularity is connected with diffidence—and eminent piety is mingled with extraordinary displays of genius—to such an object the severity of sarcasm is improperly directed, and every well regulated mind must view its exercise with pain.

About this time his health again declined. A severe cold for some days deprived him of his voice—and he was compelled to rest one Sabbath day from his public work. What were his feelings in prospect of that Sabbath, this letter will declare.

XXIV.

TO MR. JOHN HADDON.

December 6, 1809.

"My dear friend—It appears that your suspicions that I should preach three times to-morrow, will not, cannot be realized, for Mr. Western, as well as those around me are agreed, that I must not go to Hertford at all, judging it dangerous for me to go out, much more so to preach. Yesterday I passed a miserable day. The thought of the pain of mind the letter I sent home would occasion to my friends, hurt me much, and I was much worse than I had been before, as my lungs and throat felt more inflamed. To-day I think I am better, but still very far from well. I can scarcely bear the prospect of a silent Sabbath. I think I shall be quite out of my element to-morrow. Oh! that I did but more firmly believe, that he who is my Saviour does all things well, and that he who sustains the dread character of Judge of all the earth, must do right. If I am able, I shall hear Mr. Hordle in the morning. I have no voice yet. I hope it is not irretrievably lost. I need not say, that if you can call this evening, it will give me unspeakable pleasure.

"Yours affectionately,

"Thomas Spencer."

Reflecting on this temporary indisposition in a letter to his father, he says—"I have reason to hope that the measure of affliction with which our heavenly Father thought fit to visit me, has been made a blessing to my soul. It gave me time for reflection and close self-examination. It gave a new zest to my feelings, and when it was removed, I hope I was inspired with fresh ardor to live for the glory of God."

Amid the constant bustle of a public life, the retirement which temporary indisposition affords, must be most beneficial to a pious mind. Then it can relax into a calm and intimate communion with itself. It can quietly indulge in such a review of the past—and such an anticipation of the future, as will tend not a little, under the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit, to curb its impetuosity—correct its levity—and regulate its principles. From the chamber of sickness, the exercises of the pulpit will be furnished with materials of the highest order; and the beds of the diseased will be attended with a sympathy, which experience of similar affliction only can excite.

The greater part of the Christmas vacation Mr. Spencer spent at Brighton, and on the first day of the year 1810, he preached at the Rev. Mr. Styles' chapel, to young people, from 2 Chron. xxxiv. 27, 28. "Because thine heart was tender, and thou didst humble thyself before God, when thou heardst his words against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, and humbledst thyself before me, and didst rend thy clothes and weep before me: I have even heard thee also, saith the Lord. Behold I will gather thee to thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered to thy grave in peace. Neither shall thine eyes see all the evil that I will bring upon this place, and upon the inhabitants of the same."

The good seed which he was the instrument of scattering in Brighton, very rapidly sprang up. In a letter to his father, written immediately on his return from thence, and dated Jan. 12th, 1810, he says, 'a young person who heard me at Mr. Styles' last year, was called by divine grace under my instrumentality, and died before I went this time, bearing an honorable testimony to the religion of Jesus, and to her interest in it. Oh! what hath God wrought!"

During his stay at Brighton, he had occasion to solicit a favor of his friend in London, the performance of which was acknowledged in the following letter.

XXV.

TO MR. HADDON.

Brighton, January 1, 1810.

"My dear friend—However you may smile at the idea of my writing you a 'letter of thanks,' I assure you I think you have a claim upon it, for you have done for me what I should have liked few others to have done; but suffice it to say, it came safe to hand. Last Thursday evening I preached on Luke xxiv. 32. Yesterday morning at the Countess', on Eph. ii. 14. In the evening at Mr. Styles', it being the close of the year, on Exodus xxiii. 20. To-night I shall *only* preach, as one minister will commence and another close with prayer. It is said that I shall preach at the chapel on Thursday evening. You ask me, where I shall be next Sabbath. Many advise me to remain at Brighton; but it is my present intention to return home on the Friday, though I really feel myself in a difficulty about it. I hope I have, since I have been at this place, enjoyed the divine blessing—those with whom I associate are the excellent of the earth—with no others have I any occasion to be at all connected. In this respect I am like your good friend Mr. H. of Westminster. We certainly do not in general sufficiently estimate the worth of the society of those who discover the mind that was in Christ;—great is the benefit we may derive from their company. Oh! let those of us who fear the Lord speak often with one another; one may thus come at each other's follies, and stimulate each other to the performance of that good, acceptable, and perfect will of God. I think my cold is getting better. After I had preached last night, a valuable young Scotch clergyman who was there, wished I might live to preach many such sermons—what could I say, but '*all the days of my appointed time will I wait till my change come.*' It is a great satisfaction to know, that we are training up for heaven and 'ripening apace for the vision of God.' Pray for me, that this perseverance may be given me.

merited shame, when they behold him so early stript of those honors, talents, advantages, and successes, which exposed him to their jealousy and malignity. If these unworthy men were before me, I would 'speak daggers to them, but use none!'"—*See Styles' Funeral Sermon for the Rev. T. Spencer.*

You know my object is the glory of God in the good of souls—that this may be accomplished, by my exertions, is my prayer, my hope, my aim. Whether living or dying, may we be the Lord's. I have, however, at present no other idea, than that I shall be spared yet, and *not die, but live and declare the works of the Lord.** Wishing you the enjoyment of the good will of Him that dwelt in the bush, and assuring you of my steady attachment,

"I remain yours affectionately,

"THOMAS SPENCER."

On Wednesday, the 28th of February, being a day appointed for a general fast, Mr. Spencer preached a sermon at Hoxton chapel, adapted to the occasion; his text was Ezek. lx. 4. "Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the men that sigh and cry for all the abominations that are done in the midst thereof." The general scope and style of this sermon may be ascertained by the following extract from the communication of his friend:—

"A minister said to me, 'I don't know how a good fast sermon can be preached, without touching upon politics.'—'If you will hear Spencer to-morrow, I think you will find that it can be done.' When we met again, he told me that he had heard an excellent fast sermon, without a word upon politics. I remember, that in that sermon he said, 'when your ear is pained with oaths and imprecations as you pass the street, remember that that swearer is your fellow countryman, calling for vengeance upon *your* country, and do you, by ejaculatory prayer, strive to avert it.'"

To enter into a minute detail of the places at which Mr. Spencer preached between this period and the ensuing vacation, would be useless. Suffice it to say, that his labors were unremitting; that he visited several congregations in the country—particularly those at *Hertford*, *Reading*, *Henly*, and *Brighton*.

He was appointed one of the three students who should deliver the public orations at the coming anniversary—held at midsummer. This preyed with considerable anxiety upon his mind, and although one should have imagined that by this time he had become familiar with large auditories and critical hearers—yet we find him shrinking from the task, and expressing many fears respecting it. The subject allotted to him was, "THE INFLUENCE OF THE GOSPEL ON THE SPIRIT AND TEMPER." His colleagues in that trying service were, Messrs. John Burder and Stenner; and to these gentlemen were given as topics of discussion, "THE DOCTRINE OF THE ATONEMENT," and "THE INFLUENCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT." The day before that on which the discourses were to be delivered, he expressed his feelings thus:—

XXVI.

TO MR. JOHN HADDON.

Hoxton, June 19, 1810.

"MY DEAR FRIEND—Consonant with your request, I here transmit to you the notes of the sermon on Eutychus: if you can, let me have them again before I go into Lancashire. You mention *to-morrow*, and oh! what anxiety do I feel in the prospect of it; already it has cost me some tears, it may cost me many more. Would to God that I may experience the assisting grace of Him who has before proved himself able to do for me exceeding abundantly above all that I could ask or think. "If the light of his countenance shine upon me, then I shall shine in the sight of heaven, and in the eyes of his saints, who know and can recognise the reflections of the Saviour's glory. From what I can anticipate of the congregation, it will be terrific; but does not the promise, '*I am with you always*,' extend to particular occasions? Most certainly it does; then it takes in this trying service. May I have faith and trust in it, and be favored with an experimental confirmation of its truth. Believing that you do sincerely and constantly commend me to the kind care of your Father and my Father, of your God and my God, I remain

"Affectionately yours,

"THOMAS SPENCER."

We now arrive at the period of Mr. Spencer's first visit to Liverpool. Before we pass on with him to that new and interesting scene, it may be well to pause, and take such a general view of his mode of thinking and acting, while a student, as the following characteristic sketches from the hand of his most intimate friend, will furnish. I shall present them in a miscellaneous way just as they occur. Thus the reader will converse with him—hear his own sentiments, expressed in his own language, and imperceptibly become familiar with the man.

"'That passage,' said he, 'is much upon my mind'—'Let no man despise thy youth.' I understand the apostle thus:—Let your walk and conduct be such, that no man *can* despise thy youth. And such shall be my own.'

"He was favored with peculiar facility in composition. 'Many a sermon,' said he, 'have I composed between Hoxton and your house.' His ideas flowed faster than he could write them, and when alone our conversation has met with frequent interruption from his stopping to commit to paper, before they escaped him, the ideas crossing his mind. Turning to me privately, as I sat by his side one evening at the tea-table of a friend, 'Look at that,' said he, 'will it do?' It was the sketch of a sermon, which he had composed during the conversation. 'I don't know,' said he, (and those who suppose my friend was boasting, did not know him) 'I don't know,' said he, 'that for a long time I have had time enough for any one sermon: I was crampt in every head for want of time.' His sermons at that time were 65 minutes to 75 in preaching; though his hearers were not aware of it.

"In composing, he used to fold a sheet of foolscap paper in eight leaves, leaving the last side for the heads of application. However long the sermon might be, he never wrote more of it, and in preaching, varied the sermon every time he preached it. 'How do you obtain your texts?' 'I keep a little book in which I enter every text of Scripture which comes into my mind with power and sweetness. Were I to dream of a passage of Scripture, I should enter it; and when I sit down to compose, I look over the book, and have never found myself at a loss for a subject.'

"His memory was remarkably tenacious; he could regularly repeat every service in which he had ever engaged, with the chapter which he had read, and those of his acquaintance who were present. Returning from Halloway, after preaching, said he, 'Did you perceive any thing particular in me this morning?' 'No.' 'I was very ill in the pulpit; my memory totally forsook me; I could not recollect my subject, but having my notes in my pocket, I took them out and read them.' 'I am glad

* Alas! how blind are we to futurity! A clergyman not long since, while uttering these very words in the pulpit, suddenly turned pale—his voice faltered—he fell back and expired! Little did the amiable Spencer think, that the hand which thus conveyed to his friend the pleasing anticipation of a long and useful life, should lie so soon in the impotence of death!

of it; I give you joy; you can no longer condemn assistance to an imperfect memory.' 'O no, I boast no more; from henceforth, I am silent upon that subject.'

"'The young man that has just passed my study door,' said he, 'is fearful that he shall not keep up *variety* in his sermons. The best way that I find to attain variety is continually to ask myself 'What is there in the circumstances before me, that will benefit my sermon on Sabbath morning?' for a minister should turn every thing into gold. And by keeping my eye continually upon that point, I am seldom at a loss for variety.'

"Few persons have held pulpit eloquence in higher estimation than Spencer did, or in more contempt when it stood in competition with the interest of souls. I remember asking his opinion of an eloquent sermon which he had been hearing—'Why,' said he, 'I could have wept over it—I could have wept to hear immortals so treated.'

"'Your morning sermon yesterday was approved, but not that in the afternoon.' 'No, I suppose not, and I will give you the reason. In the morning, when I preached on privileges, they were pleased; but when in the afternoon, I came to duties, they remembered their treatment of their late venerable pastor. I particularly respect aged ministers, and love to assist them, and generally add a trifle to the collection, when I have been preaching in behalf of a church which has an aged minister.'

"He was much tried by the envy of some little minds. Mr. S. said —— to him, 'You was very late, I hear, at Walworth.' 'Yes, Sir, and there you may see your own error; you know *you* say I am too eager for the pulpit, now you see your mistake.' At another time, 'Spencer,' said a person whose name shall be secret, 'Popularity is a dangerous thing.' 'It is.' 'No one is popular long.' 'Very true.' 'You are popular *now*, but you will not be so long.' 'That I certainly shall not, Sir, if *your wishes* are accomplished; but I fully believe, that my popularity hurts you more than it does me.' The bell soon after summoned him to read (in his turn) a sermon for general criticism. The first person called upon said, that its *merits* were such, that he had nothing to say of its *defects*. That sentiment was universal. 'And,' said he to me afterwards, 'when I considered what had passed, I felt that that was a moment of gratification.'

"A lady, who had misunderstood an idea in his sermon, wrote me a hasty letter, charging him with antinomianism, and me with gross impropriety in hearing him. It was a Saturday night, and he was to preach in the same pulpit the next day. I went to inform him of the circumstance, that he might take an unperceived opportunity of explaining himself. He held out his hand to give his usual affectionate squeeze, when I drew back. 'I don't know how to shake hands with an antinomian.' 'An antinomian! What is the matter?' 'Read this proof of it.' He read it; his pleasantry subsided; and with a countenance which spoke the feeling of his noble soul, 'O,' said he, 'this letter does me good.—The attention of that congregation would have led me to suppose that they were pleased, and perhaps profited by what they heard; and yet you see that there were those present who not only misunderstood me, but supposed that I was a preacher of antinomianism. This letter does me good; for sometimes Satan claps me on the back, here in my study, and says, 'That sermon will do very well, and especially from one so young as you'—and then I begin to mount, and fancy that I *am* somebody; but such a letter as this clips my wings—and then,' said he, (with indescribable expression,) 'I drop into my place—the dust. Do bring me all the intelligence of this kind that you can.'

"How I wish they would begin the service with Watts' 152d hymn, 2d book.* That hymn always soothes my mind in the opening of worship. My whole soul enters into it, especially the last two verses.' 'Why do you not request that it may be given out?' 'Because it does not become one of my age to dictate.' ''Tis no dictation, but a gratification of your friends; it secures congeniality through the service when you mention the hymns you wish.' 'And can we have it to *Staughton?*' 'No, to *Prospect.*' 'No, no, *Staughton;* that is my tune for a common metre, and *Shirland* for short metre.' The 5th verse *he* frequently quoted.

"One day mentioning to him an interesting text of Mr. Cecil's, preached on the last night of the year, said he, 'That will just do for me to preach at Brighton, to conclude the services of the present year. But don't show me Mr. Cecil's till I have composed mine. I would not borrow a single idea.'

"Preaching one morning at Hoxton, after he had prayed as usual at his entrance into the pulpit, I missed him; he bent forward for a considerable time so low, that I could scarcely perceive him from the gallery. When I afterwards asked him if any thing ailed him, said he, 'When I went into the pulpit, and saw that crowded audience, recollecting that they were all looking to me for instruction, and remembering my own youth and inexperience, I was overwhelmed, and leaning forward, implored more earnestly the divine assistance.'

"While preaching at Jewin-street, he one afternoon took the two lower steps at once, in ascending the pulpit stairs.—When we afterwards met, I asked, 'Did you notice the manner of your going into the pulpit?' 'I did, and thought that you would also—it was inadvertent; but it was wrong. It did not become the solemnity of the place.—I never remember such a circumstance before, and will be more guarded in future.' As a proof of the *necessity* of his watchfulness over the minutiæ of his actions, I mention that an aged Christian said to me some time afterwards, 'I loved Spencer's sermons, but there was a lightness about him.' 'A lightness! when, and where did he discover it?' 'At our

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* SINAI AND SION.

Heb. xii. 18, &c.

"Not to the terrors of the Lord,
The tempest, fire and smoke;
Not to the thunder of that word,
Which God on Sinai spoke;

But we are come to Sion's hill,
The city of our God,
Where milder words declare his will,
And spread his love abroad.

Behold th' innumerable host,
Of angels, clothed in light!
Behold the spirits of the just,
Whose faith is turned to sight!

Behold the bless'd assembly there,
Whose names are writ in heaven;
And God, the judge of all, declares
Their vilest sins forgiven.

The saints on earth, and all the dead,
But one communion make;
All join in Christ, their living head,
And of his grace partake.

In such society as this
My weary soul would rest:
The man that dwells where Jesus is,
Must be for ever blest."

meeting, in jumping up the pulpit stairs.' 'Did you see it more than once?' 'No.' 'Then I can tell you, that that once he felt and lamented as deeply as you could; and I am sure that he never repeated it. Is not that satisfactory?' 'It is.'

"Spencer followed Cecil; he united deep humility with true ministerial dignity; nor do I conceive it possible for a youth to be less affected by popularity than he was; and as to flattery, if his flatterers had known the light in which he viewed them, they would have been silent. Coming from a vestry, where adulation had been offered—'Don't fear for me,' said he, 'on account of what has passed; it was too weak to hurt: my danger is when those, on whose judgment I depend, speak unguardedly!' At another time, after a young man had been very lavish in his praises, (who had several times been guilty of the same impropriety,) I told him I thought the next time he addressed himself to me, I should give him a hint of it. 'O no,' said he, 'treat it with the same contempt that I do. To mention it, would give too much importance to his judgment. I would not have him think that *his* judgment could *do any harm.*'

"Spencer was particularly happy in his choice of texts for particular occasions: 'I feel great difficulty,' said he, 'in preaching at Hertford, where I have to address many who walked with God before I was born. To-morrow will be the first Sabbath that I have regularly supplied there. I have chosen for my subject, Romans xvi. 7.' In which he showed what it was to be in Christ; and the duties which aged Christians owe to younger ones—faithful reproof and exhortation—prayer for them, &c. For his sermon on regeneration, he chose James i. 18, which, as he said, comprised the *whole* subject:—the efficient *cause*—'The will of God;' the grand means used—'the word of truth;' the great end in view—that believers should be—'First fruits of His creatures.' A gentleman, who possesses a fine mind, said to me, 'I have heard so much of Spencer, that when I went to hear him, I expected to be disappointed; but I found the reverse to be the case. When he gave out his text it was with an emphasis which so forcibly laid open the apostle's argument, that my attention was rivetted, and I was perfectly astonished.'

"He loved to improve the festivals of the church, such as Christmas and Easter, 'because' said he, 'people expect then to hear upon the subject, and I think we ought to meet every appearance of preparation of mind with suitable instruction. The passage of Scripture which led my mind to the ministry, and which satisfies me as to the propriety of my engaging in it, is that promise of God to the Gentile church, Isaiah lxix. 21.—Oh! that text is very precious to me; while the death of Miss —— at Brighton, and Miss —— at ——, tends to convince me that I am right.' Those ladies died in the Lord, and were called under Spencer's ministry.

"'I used,' said he, 'to feel very much in preaching before certain characters. My difficulty is now removed by considering, that, let them be as learned or as pious as they may, it is probable that they have not turned their attention to the individual point before me so closely as I have, and therefore it is likely that my sermon may afford some instruction even to them, and this thought gives me courage.'

"Mr. Spencer's simplicity in dress was well known. He avoided in that respect, the very appearance of evil, that his ministry might not be blamed. One Sabbath morning, when he called for me, he had a new coat on, which I told him I thought was more fashionable than he would approve. 'I did not know it,' said he, and on the next Sabbath morning, he asked me if I thought it more becoming *then:* he had had it altered.

"I was desired by several medical gentlemen to inform him, that unless he slackened his exertions, he could not live to see five and twenty. When I mentioned it, he said, 'that it certainly must be attended to, for that his hope was to live a long and useful life.' He therefore determined to alter the length of his sermons from an hour or sixty-five minutes to forty-five.

"'I am going,' said he, 'to preach at Vauxhall tomorrow, where you may come with a very safe conscience. You need not be afraid of a large congregation *there.* You do not like large congregations for me; but don't you remember how much more encouragement and satisfaction the man has who fishes in a pond which is full of fish, than he who fishes in a place where he knows there are but two or three.'

"Before S. left the academy, a gentleman, whose judgment, or piety, few are disposed to dispute, said to me, 'If it were not for the sound of his voice, with my eyes shut I could suppose him a man of seventy. He is ripening fast for heaven—I can fancy him an angel, come down into the pulpit, soon to return.'

"Another gentleman, possessed of undeniable critical skill, and difficult to please, after he had heard him, said, 'I stood the whole service—and I could have stood till midnight. I felt as under the influence of a charm I could not resist, and was rivetted to the spot, intent only upon the fascinating object I saw before me.'

"It was with sincere pity that he saw any young minister descend from the holy dignity of his station, by attention, as soon as the service was concluded, to the advances of females, who, had they really received the benefit they professed, would have shown it in a very different way."*

Mr. Spencer was appointed by the committee to spend the midsummer vacation in this year at Newington chapel, Liverpool, then destitute of a pastor, by the death of the Rev. David Bruce. The report of his extraordinary talents and amazing popularity had already from various quarters, reached that place. And the congregation amongst whom he was, for a few weeks to labor, had some pleasing expectations, that they might find in him a future pastor, every way qualified for the important sphere of usefulness, which so large and populous a town presented. But on the mind of Mr. Spencer far other impressions had been unhappily produced. From whatever sources he had drawn his information of the state of religion and manners in this place, it was certainly most incorrect—and such as led him to anticipate his visit with feelings of considerable uneasiness and reluctance. Nor did he seem at all anxious to conceal the fact, that his coming was the consequence of a necessity, to which he was compelled to bow. So deep was his prejudice against Liverpool, that it seems to have caused the only exception to that uniform submission with which he yielded to the arrangements made by his constituents for his labors. But on this occasion, he did not hesitate frankly to assure a gentleman, who meeting him in London, expressed a hope, that they should soon have the pleasure of seeing him in Liverpool, that "it was not *his* wish to see Liverpool—and that although the committee had appointed him to go, he should do all in his power to prevail upon them to send some other student."

But a visit upon which so much depended, and

* This is to Spencer's honor. Those who are accustomed to attend the vestries in London, after the sermons of popular preachers, will enter into the meaning of this observation. It would be well, if some whom it may concern would also take the hint it affords.

whence such amazing consequences were to flow, could not be abandoned by a superintending Providence, to the obstacles of his prejudices, or the influence of his feelings. His destination was fixed. —It was the voice of duty, and he obeyed. He arrived in Liverpool on Saturday, the 30th of June, 1810, and commenced his public labors on the following Sabbath.

Mr. Spencer selected for the subject of his first discourse, Luke xxiv. 32, "*And they said one to another, did not our hearts burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures.*"* In the afternoon he preached from Heb. xii. 24. "*And to the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than the blood of Abel.*" And in the evening from 1 Cor. xv. 25, "*For he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet.*"

The impression produced by the labors of this Sabbath will be long remembered. The emotion then awakened has not subsided to this day. Every sermon that he preached tended to deepen the conviction of his piety and talents—and to endear him to the people. His lively, affectionate manner, and the simple but elegant style of his discourses, captivated all who heard him. Every sermon produced accessions to the congregation of such as, drawn by the report of his extraordinary powers, pressed to witness their display. The chapel soon became crowded to excess—and not alone the thoughtless and the gay, whom the charms of a persuasive eloquence and an engaging manner might attract, but pious and experienced Christians sat at his feet with deep attention and delight. There seemed to be indeed *a shaking amongst the dry bones.* A divine unction evidently attended his ministry, and such were the effects produced, that every beholder, with astonishment and admiration, cried "what hath God wrought!"

In his own views of Liverpool, too, a great change was wrought by the remarkable circumstances attendant on his ministry. The kind assiduities of the family under whose hospitable roof he resided, and an intercourse with the pious part of the congregation, which they carefully promoted, tended gradually to weaken his prejudices, and at length completely to turn the bias, and reverse the purpose of his mind. The period of his stay was limited to five Sabbaths; but at the earnest solicitation of the people, he consented, after communicating with his friends in London, to add another to the number. And in the afternoon of the last Sabbath, he preached from Deut. xxxiii. 3, '*Yea, he loved the people,*' in such a style of endearment and affection, as seemed to warrant the indulgence of their warmest hopes. The last week of his visit was spent in the most delightful intercourse with Christian friends; and on Tuesday, the 7th of August, he left Liverpool with reluctance and tears.

The following extracts are from his correspondence while at Liverpool.

XXVII.

TO MR. HADDON.

Liverpool, July 3, 1810.

"My dear friend,

* * * * * * * *

"I had a most uncomfortable journey. The distance was so great, the company so disagreeable, and I so low spirited, that I can truly say, I never travelled in such misery before. When I arrived at Manchester, there was no one to meet me at the coach. No one expected me. After a great deal of trouble I found out Mr. Smith's house, and I shall always feel indebted to him for the kindness with which he received me, though unexpected, and for the hospitality with which he entertained me till Saturday morning, when I left Manchester for *Liverpool.* And say you, what are your sentiments about *that?*—I freely tell you then, that I think it is an excellent town, &c. &c.; but I had rather any one should be here supplying than myself, and I long for the time when I shall leave for Hoxton.

* * * * * * * *

"Depend upon it, if possible, I will set off for London on Monday, July 30th; I wish it were to-morrow—but perhaps I do wrong in complaining. May you enjoy the presence of Him who has shut me up from the society of my beloved companions for a time, perhaps that I might seek more earnestly after his own.

"I remain,

"Yours affectionately,

"Thomas Spencer."

XXVIII.

TO MR. HADDON.

Liverpool, July 17, 1810.

"My dear friend—I suppose you have been looking for a letter for a day or two past from your friend at Liverpool, so here it is come at last. I did not preach at Manchester, for notice had been given the Sabbath before that there would be no preaching there the next Wednesday evening—nor have I been to ——. I saw no one from his house when I was at Manchester, nor have I heard any thing from him since; most likely I shall not see him at all. In fact I have quite visiting enough among the people of the congregation.

* * * * * * * *

"Here are some excellent people, very pious, and zealous for the honor of God, and the good of immortal souls, in this town. With some of them I shall be almost sorry to part.

"Last Sunday evening I preached the sermon for Hoxton; we collected about 40*l.* The place I preach in is called *Newington chapel.* I forget the name of the street it stands in. There are many more dissenting places of worship here than you seem aware of. I am not yet certain whether I stay six Sabbaths.

"Mr. —— has written me a long and pressing letter for me to go to Plymouth Dock, which he says is just the thing for me—he wishes me to settle there—gives an exceeding high character of the place. According to his request I must write to him soon, but I scarce know in what manner. It is a large congregation, and he says, that there is there 'a huge army of the soldiers of the cross.'

"I will take care to get you a plan of the town. I hear that a fire has consumed Huntingdon's chapel in Tichfield street—is it true? Dr. W. has written to me requesting me to supply New Court the first Sabbath in August.

"The Wednesday after I wrote to you, I preached on Psalms lxi. 2. Following Sabbath—morning, Colos. iii. 3: afternoon, John x. 9: evening, Job xxxvi. 18. The next Wednesday evening, Gal. iv. 7. Last Sabbath morning, Zech. vi. 13: afternoon, the same concluded: evening, Zech. iii. 7. Monday evening, at the prayer meetings, I either go over the outline of one of the sermons preached the day before, or else give a short exhortation, as at Hoxton.

"I suppose you know that I have written to D. C—— but not to Mr. B——. For the fact is, I had rather not. I do not know how, and I do not see that it would do any good, so must decline it. I am out almost every day. Oh why should people be afraid to let me be alone: why will they not let me

* See Appendix, No. III.

enjoy my much-loved solitude! On several accounts I feel anxious to get home; and can now indeed say, 'Hoxton, with all thy faults, I love thee still.'

"Present my respects to all our *friends* in town. Give me as much intelligence as you can in your next, and believe me still

"Your sincere friend,

"THOMAS SPENCER."

Very soon after his return to Hoxton, Mr. Spencer received from the church and congregation at Newington chapel, an unanimous and pressing invitation to accept the pastoral office over them. The call was dated on the 8th of August, 1810. After near seven weeks deliberation, Mr. Spencer returned an answer in the affirmative. In what exercises of mind these seven weeks were spent, those who knew the peculiar circumstances of his situation can well conceive. On the one hand—the unanimous request of a people to whom God had directed him contrary to his wish, and to whom he had become singularly endeared:—the imperious call of duty to a sphere of action for which his talents seemed every way adapted, in which his labors had been already remarkably successful, and which promised most extensive usefulness. These were circumstances of no common magnitude. But on the other hand, there were many powerful ties to bind him to the neighborhood of the metropolis. His family—his best friendships—his most endeared connections—the scenes of his early and honorable labors—all conspired in the prospect of his removal to so great a distance, to awaken the most painful and distressing feelings in his mind. And resolutely to resist the importunities of friends, the value of whose society we fully know—to rise superior to those local attachments which long and happy intercourse cannot fail to form—and to leave the circle to which time and frequent interchange of sentiment have rendered us familiar and endeared, for a land of strangers—involve a sacrifice which only the voice of duty can demand, or the hope of usefulness repay. Yet such are the sacrifices which the Christian minister must frequently be called to make; and whilst on his part they are with cheerfulness surrendered to the call of duty, and the cause of Christ, let those in whose particular behalf they are claimed, seek by every affectionate office of friendship, to blunt the edge of separation, and relieve as much as may be by kindness, the memory of distant friendships and endeared connections.

I insert a copy of Mr. Spencer's answer to the call which he received from the church and congregation at Newington; as it will afford to the reader an additional opportunity of obtaining an acquaintance with its amiable author.

XXIX.

To the Independent Church of Christ, assembling in Newington chapel, Liverpool.

"MY CHRISTIAN FRIENDS—Being unwilling to keep you any longer in suspense than is absolutely necessary, upon the important subject of my settlement with a church and congregation, I feel it my duty to reply to your obliging and respectful invitation. You are well aware, that I came amongst you influenced by the strongest prejudices against the place, and resolutely determined never to think of it as a sphere calculated for me. Whilst I was amongst you, however, several circumstances united to remove the strength of my prejudices, and I trust to make me determined by every appointed and lawful means to ascertain the will of God, and when ascertained, cheerfully to fulfil it, however opposed it might be to my private wishes and inclinations. A review of the partial degree of success with which my labors in Liverpool were honored, does afford me considerable pleasure, and I must say, that I speak the real sentiments of my heart when I confess, that the manner in which you, my respected friends and brethren in the gospel, have conducted this important affair, has raised you exceedingly in my esteem, and given me to believe, that a preacher would find among you as a people, those motives to diligence and those sources of real happiness in the prosecution of his work, which, alas! are denied to many a faithful minister of the New Testament.

"When I regard you as a church and congregation, I feel anxiously concerned for your spiritual and eternal welfare, and indeed earnestly desire, if consistent with the good pleasure of His will, the great Head of the Church would make use of *me* to build you up in faith and holiness; but my motives for thinking favorably of your invitation arise also from other sources. I look at the state of thousands of inhabitants in that vast town, to many of whom I hope to be the instrument of conveying the 'joyful sound;' my soul longs that they may receive the salvation which is in Jesus Christ, with eternal glory, and influenced I have reason to believe by the direction of my God, I resolve to preach among them the unsearchable riches of Christ.

"I assure you, my fellow travellers to Zion, I can observe, with admiration, peculiarities in this dispensation which never before struck me in reference to any other situation. Oh may it appear, that this work and this counsel is of God!

"*Some* difficulties must be met, and some sacrifices must be made, *by me*, when I leave the scenes of my former exertions in the cause of Christ, for the sake of the people at Newington. But these are things which I must ever expect; these are circumstances which I resolved should never move me, when I first gave myself to God and His Christ!

"Truly believing then that I am acting under the direction of an all wise Jehovah, and humbly asking that this may be made manifest in after days, *I accept the invitation* you have given me to exercise over you the pastoral office. I comply with your unanimous request, and shall from this day consider myself as solemnly bound to you, if you see it right to allow me the following requisitions:—

"That I preach among you regularly but *twice on the Sabbath*, viz. morning and evening. I mention this, because I know that my constitution will not admit of three services in the day, and I am sure it is not consistent with your wishes, that I should prevent myself from future exertions by presuming on too much at first; and the plan I propose will, I am persuaded, after trial prove beneficial rather than injurious to the cause at Newington. To preaching to you twice on the Sabbath and once in the week, I shall never feel the least objection. My other wish is—

"That I may have in the spring of the year six weeks annually to myself, to visit my friends, and occasionally see other parts of the Lord's vineyard.

"I do not leave Hoxton academy till after Christmas, and perhaps may not be with you so early as you wish. It is my intention, however, to commence my labors among you, if convenient to yourselves, on the first Sabbath in February, 1811. Your sentiments on the subjects I have mentioned, you will be pleased to communicate to me as early as possible.

"And now just allow me, my respected friends, to request you not to form too sanguine expectations in reference to the pleasure you expect to enjoy

when I become your pastor. You will doubtless find in me much to pity and to blame; yet it is my earnest prayer that you may never have to charge me with neglect in watching over you in the Lord; finally, I request your supplications for me at the throne of the heavenly Majesty, that a door of utterance may be opened unto me, that *on me* the communications of divine grace may ever be bestowed, that Christ may be magnified by my preaching and my life, that I may be preserved faithful unto death, and then receive a crown of life.

"Accept my cordial wishes for the prosperity of your own souls, of your families, but especially of your Christian society and of the cause of Zion amongst you. Cease not to pray solemnly, fervently, and without intermission, for me, and believe me yours, in our glorious Lord,

"THOMAS SPENCER."

Hoxton, September 26, 1810.

This official communication to the church was accompanied by a private letter to the friend, under whose roof he had resided during his occasional visit, and to whose care the preceding document was addressed.

XXX.

"*Hoxton college, September* 19.

"MY DEAR SIR—If you wish immediately to know the purport of my enclosed answer to the respectful and pressing invitation I have received from Newington, turn to the 22d verse of the Epistle to Philemon.

"I hope you will forgive me for the long, the doubtful suspence, in which I have been obliged to detain you; in my own view I have acted rightly, and I have no doubt but you will say that it was all proper, when you come to hear my statement. It is astonishing what I have had to meet with through the *kindness* of my London friends—kindness you will think improperly manifested, when I tell you, that they, with very few exceptions, entreat, beg, and request, that I would not settle at Liverpool. I can only tell them, that in this affair,

> 'I hear a voice they cannot *hear;*
> I see a hand they cannot *see!*'

And have the leadings of Providence lost their importance? or the direction of Heaven become merely matter of idle talk? I have not written individually to any person in Liverpool besides yourself: I should have found a difficulty in speaking of the business before I had made known my determination. By the first Sabbath in February next year, I shall (God willing) be again in Liverpool, when I hope the presence of my covenant God will accompany me, and his Spirit grant me wide success. The prospect of leaving my friends and connections for so distant a place as Liverpool, and especially as many of them oppose the plan, sometimes fills me with melancholy gloom; but 'thy will be done' is a petition that well becomes me in my situation; may I have grace given me to use it with a sincere and believing heart.

* * * * * * * * * *

"I trust it will appear, that the general good of the church of Christ, and of the inhabitants of Liverpool, is the object to which I have directed my warm and unremitting exertions. Farewell.

"I remain sincerely yours,

"THOMAS SPENCER."

To this may be added an extract from a letter, dated September 1st, 1810.

"My mind still inclines to Liverpool, and that for the most substantial reasons. If I accept this invitation, I shall be obliged to make some sacrifices; but ought I not to make them cheerfully, when the honor of God, and the happiness of immortal souls require them? especially as I am bound not to count even my life dear unto me, so that I may finish my course with joy. The sacrifices to which I allude are chiefly, perhaps altogether, occasioned by absence from my friends and connections, and a removal from those interesting scenes of exertion which have witnessed my first efforts to disseminate divine truth, and in which I have been favored with some success."

Thus happily was a point of so much importance to the interests of religion in Liverpool determined. A consideration of the issue of *this* affair, together with many others perpetually occurring, should teach us to suspend our judgments of persons and places we have never seen—and should tend to weaken those unjust and injurious prejudices against them which we too hastily form—too tenaciously cherish. Often we picture to ourselves the most enchanting scenes, the most delightful associations, in connection with a spot we are about to visit, and are disappointed—and as often we find those charming scenes, and happy associations, in regions which our prejudices had invested with every thing gloomy and repulsive. Had Spencer yielded to the impulse of his feelings, he had never become pastor of a church in Liverpool. And although the memory of his lamented fate may indnce, from feelings generally regarded as honorable to humanity, a wish that he had not—yet the *Christian* sees in this the hand of God—and, contemplating the mighty work which in his short ministry he was honored to perform, rejoices that, however mysterious the decree, it was ordered so. It is not for us to calculate whether he would have been *more* useful, or *less* useful, or *as* useful elsewhere—he *was* eminently useful in Liverpool—and though all must weep that he should be so soon, so suddenly removed—yet none who witnessed the extraordinary impression which his labors produced in so large and populous a town, but must rejoice in their success, and adore the Providence which brought him there.

Nor was it from the want of other calls that Mr. Spencer was induced to accept that which he received from Liverpool. Many were the churches which desired to enjoy his valuable ministry; amongst others, the following places may be named —*Kidderminster, Kentish Town, Jewin-street, Worthing, Southampton,* and *Tonbridge chapel.*

This last-mentioned chapel is a recently erected building, in the new road leading from Pentonville to Paddington, near London—in a populous, respectable, and increasing neighborhood. During its erection, an impression was encouraged, both on Mr. Spencer's mind, and that of the surrounding inhabitants, that *he* would probably be the preacher. The idea was not at all unpleasant to him. In most respects the arrangement met his wishes; and he had even laid the plan on which he resolved to act, provided his expectations had been realized. He purposed to reside a few miles out of town, to prevent the dissipation of his time, and to come to London on certain days to visit his people. He expected much gratification from the neighborhood of his friend and fellow student, the Rev. S. Haslock, minister of Kentish Town chapel, with whom he hoped to unite in plans of usefulness for their vicinity. But circumstances did not conspire to call into exercise those judicious and benevolent designs.

The chapel was opened early in November, 1810; and on Sunday, the 18th, he preached his first sermon there. It was in allusion to its recent opening, founded on Heb. x. 19—22. After the congregation was dismissed, he went over the whole building, the plan of which pleased him much. He was

particularly, delighted with the deep front gallery which by exhibiting a multitude of attentive faces, encouraged him, he said, in his preaching. In that chapel he frequently addressed large and deeply interested auditories—and in that pulpit a public tribute of respect was paid to his memory in a funeral sermon, delivered by the Rev. Richard Slate, minister of Stand, near Manchester.*

From the period of his acceptance of the call to Liverpool, till February, 1811, when he actually entered on the pastoral office there, his time was wholly occupied in the diligent pursuit of his studies, and the labors of the pulpit. Not a Sabbath passed, but witnessed twice or thrice his faithful publication of the gospel of peace. On Sunday, the 26th of August, he revisited Dorking—a spot endeared to him by the beauty of its scenery—but more by the memory of those happy hours, which introduced him to the knowledge and esteem of a most beloved and valued friend.

The first Sabbath in November he spent at Brighton, where he preached three times in the pulpit of the Rev. Mr. Styles.

Returning to town he continued preaching in and about London till the close of the year, when he again visited Brighton, at which place he entered on the year 1811—the last of his life.

In what way his mind was exercised during this period—and how his principles as a Christian triumphed over his feelings as a man in the prospect of a long and painful separation from those he loved—may be seen by the following letter to a friend in Liverpool:—

XXXI.

Hoxton, Dec. 5th, 1810.

"My dear sir—I am persuaded that you will excuse my neglecting to write to you so long, when you recollect that the hope I daily entertained of seeing you in town appeared to represent my troubling you with an epistle as unnecessary. I am extremely pleased to hear of the increase and welfare of your family; I cannot but feel an interest in their prosperity and happiness: may the Lord pour his Spirit upon your seed, and his blessing upon your offspring, that they may spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses! I suppose I need not inform you, that I anticipate my journey to Liverpool with mingled emotions of mind. The idea of a long and painful separation from my connections does certainly at times overwhelm me with melancholy gloom; I have not yet learned to conquer my feelings, nor am I particularly eminent for philosophic heroism. The idea that I am going where divine Providence has directed me, does occasionally impart to me strong consolation; may my wishes as to extensive usefulness among you be answered; may they be exceeded in the prosperity of the church and congregation, and in the increase of spirituality and holy enjoyment in my own soul!

"I am glad you are successful in getting acceptable supplies; this is a point which should be attended to. I should like the congregation to have the best of preachers. My books, &c. I must send from London before Christmas day, that I may have no trouble with them after my return from Brighton.

"I am extremely happy in the prospect of being with your family on my first entrance into Liverpool; it will be far superior to my being with strangers. This half year has been a trying one as to preaching engagements, both on Sabbaths, and on week days. I continue supplying Hoxton, and the New Chapel, Somer's Town, till Christmas: the day after Christmas day, I hope to go to Brighton, to stay there three Sabbaths, and to return on the 17th of January, to supply Roydon and Hertford the next week; and the last Sabbath in January, to take my leave of this part of the kingdom by two sermons at Hoxton.

* * * * * * * *

"Tell our friends at Newington chapel that I am tolerably well, and wish to be kindly remembered to them. Farewell my valued friend.

"I am sincerely your's,

"Thomas Spencer."

The purposes expressed in this letter were accomplished according to the order in which they are stated. He visited Brighton, and preached on the last Sabbath of the old year three times, at Mr. Styles' chapel—in the evening a sermon adapted to the season, from 1 John, ii. 17, "And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever!" On the evening of the 1st of January, 1811, he preached an appropriate discourse at the Countess of Huntingdon's chapel; and on the following Thursday, and three times on the Sunday, he preached at Mr. Styles'. On the Monday evening, being the first Monday in the month, the missionary prayer meeting was held in Brighton, when he delivered a most animated and impressive address from Matt. xiii. 16—17, "Blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear; for verily I say unto you, that many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them." He continued another Sabbath in Brighton, and left that place some time in the following week. Passing through London, he went into Hertfordshire. On Sunday, January the 20th, he preached at Roydon, morning and afternoon, and at Hoddesdon in the evening. On the Tuesday evening he preached at Hertford, and slept again under his paternal roof. On Wednesday evening he preached at Stansted, and on Thursday evening again at Hertford. This was, I believe, his last visit to his native town, and to his father's house! The separation which then again took place between himself and his beloved family was final. The farewell which he bade to the scenes of his infancy and childhood was eternal! I cannot suppress the melancholy feeling which this reflection has awakened in my mind. I am arrived at length upon the eve of a mournful detail, which all along I have anticipated with emotions of distress. Alas! that one so useful should be so soon removed! And that ere we enter on the solemn engagements of his pastoral life, we should be compelled to notice circumstances so closely connected with his death!

The following Sabbath, January 27th, was the last he spent in London. On that day he preached in the morning at Hoxton chapel, from Phil. iii. 8, "Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." And in the evening at Tonbridge chapel, from 2 Cor. iv. 3. "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost." The labors of this Sabbath completed his engagements at Hoxton and Tonbridge chapels; but on the evening of the following day, (Monday,) he took an affectionate leave of his beloved friends—the constituents—the tutors—the students—and the congregation at Hoxton, from the pulpit of that chapel. The crowd that pressed to

* Mr. Slate was formerly a fellow-student with Mr. Spencer. He was supplying the pulpit at Tonbridge chapel in the autumn of 1811, the period of Mr. Spencer's death. His discourse is founded on John v. 35, "*He was a burning and a shining light.*" It was afterwards published—and has reached a second edition. The sentiments it breathes are honorable to the author's character as a man, a Christian, and a friend.

hear his last sermon (for so it proved) in London was immense. One common sentiment of attachment and grief seemed to pervade the assembly. A friend charged him on that occasion not to play upon the passions. Not that he was in the habit of doing this; but there appeared on this occasion a probability that he might. To that suggestion he replied, that "neither his feelings nor his conscience would admit of such trifling." He addressed the people on this interesting occasion from those memorable words of Paul—Acts xx. 24, "But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto me, so that I may finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus."*

Thus were Spencer's labors in the metropolis closed for ever—labors—the renewal of which thousands anticipated with delight. But he was ripening fast for glory—and rapidly advancing to the termination of his course. Yea, the impression of his excellence—the feeling of regret at his departure—was yet strong and lively in the hearts of many, when the tidings of his death shed a deeper sorrow through the scenes and circles which he had edified by his public instructions, or enlivened by his private friendship!

It was on the 28th of January, that Mr. Spencer preached his farewell sermon at Hoxton chapel—and it was on the 15th of August, in the same year, in the same pulpit—and to nearly the same congregation—that his funeral sermon was delivered by the Rev. Henry Forster Burder, one of the tutors of the academy. In that discourse, a just and elegant tribute was paid to the mingled piety and talent which formed the charm of his ministry. From the known endowments of the preacher, and from the opportunities which he enjoyed of obtaining a correct estimate of Mr. Spencer's powers, that tribute must derive considerable propriety and force: and as it chiefly regards his ministerial labors in London, I shall close these imperfect memoirs of them with an extract from it.

"During the last two years of our valuable friend's residence at Hoxton, he was very frequently engaged in preaching in London and its vicinity. As this chapel has been, on many occasions, the scene of his labors, and has been often thronged with the multitudes attracted by his abilities and piety, I need scarcely attempt an estimate of his pulpit talents. That they were eminent—that they were brilliant—that they were captivating—will not, I think, be denied by any who witnessed their exhibition. He undoubtedly displayed no small degree of pulpit eloquence, and his eloquence was distinguished by characteristic features. It was not the kind of eloquence in which a youth of genius might be expected most to excel, and of which luxuriance of imagination constitutes the chief attraction; it was not a peculiar vivacity of fancy, which gave life to his addresses, although in this respect they were not deficient; but they rather owed their effect to the energy and animation infused by the ardor of his soul, and to the unaffected fervor of his religious feelings, the impression of which was aided by no small advantages of person, voice, and elocution. In endeavoring rightly to appreciate his qualifications for the duties of the Christian ministry, I must not omit to notice the truly edifying manner in which he conducted the devotional exercises of the pulpit. His gift in prayer was peculiarly excellent. The language of his petitions seemed to breathe the ardent aspirations of a heart alive to God, and accustomed to enjoy fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.†

That he was maturing fast for the enjoyment of his reward, even when he left London to commence his pastoral engagements, is a conviction indelibly impressed upon the minds of those who were accustomed to attend his preaching, or mingle in his society. They remember certain expressions, both of countenance and language, which seemed to indicate a tone of piety—a spirituality of feeling—too exalted for a long continuance here. And it is to be regretted, that such expressions, at the time so powerful in their influence, and so carefully preserved by a tenacious memory, no pen—no pencil can portray. Hence the sermons of animated and extemporary preachers, when introduced to us from the press, lose half their force and beauty. The scope of the discourse—the process of the argument—may be indeed preserved; but the unpremeditated, momentary flashes of holy fervor, and of brilliant genius, cannot. The eloquence of the eye—the expression of the countenance—the meaning which is sometimes thrown into every limb and muscle of the frame—are wanting. And though 'tis pleasing to possess a memorial of those, whom living we revered and loved, yet the imperfection of the copy only deepens our regret at the loss of the original. In the preaching of Spencer, it seemed as though he saw before him every object he described—and felt the full force—the vast importance of every subject upon which he spoke.

Preaching one evening at Back-street, Horsley Down, and speaking of the reward of the faithful gospel minister, "Methinks," said he, "I already hear the melodious accents of the Saviour's voice, saying '*Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of thy Lord.*'" It was remarked, that he appeared as though he heard a voice personally addressing him. His anticipation was in a very few months realized!

Anxious for the usefulness and variety of his ministry, he begged of his friend, upon his leaving London, to send him any useful pamphlets or works which might come out; "Let me know," said he, "when popular ministers are in town—the texts they take for particular occasions—festivals, &c., the settling or removal of my fellow students," &c.

The last time he was with his friend alone, prior to his setting off for Liverpool, their approaching separation was, as may be well imagined, the topic of discourse—when, with his own peculiar affection and energy, he said—

"Through Christ when we together came,
In singleness of heart,
We met, O Jesus! in thy name:
And in thy name we part.

We part in body, *not in mind,*
Our minds continue one;
And each to each, in Jesus join'd,
We happily go on.

Present in spirit still we are,
And intimately nigh;
While on the wings of faith and prayer,
We Abba! Father! cry.

O may thy Spirit, dearest Lord,
In all our travels still
Direct and be our constant guard
To Zion's holy hill.

* See Appendix No. IV.

† See a sermon, delivered in Hoxton chapel, on the death of the Rev. T. Spencer, by the Rev. Henry Forster Burder, M. A. one of the tutors of the Hoxton academy—page 32.

Oh! what a joyful meeting there,
Beyond these *changing* shades;
White are the robes we then shall wear,
And crowns upon our heads.

Haste, Lord, and bring us to the day
When we shall dwell at home,
Come, O Redeemer, come away;
O Jesus quickly come."

On Sunday, 3d of February, 1811, Mr. Spencer commenced his stated, pastoral labors at Newington chapel, Liverpool. He was then just twenty years of age—possessed of every endowment that could render him eminent as a minister—and every amiable disposition that could endear him as a friend. The people of his charge, together with numbers who participated with them in their joy, hailed his entrance on his sacred duties with delight. From him they fondly anticipated a long series of varied and useful instructions—on him they gazed with admiration, as affording them no mean example of a holy and devoted life—and to him they looked with pleasure as their children's friend. That he was prepared to meet these high expectations, none who have contemplated the superior endowments of his mind can, for a moment, doubt—his literary attainments, though not splendid, were respectable—his theological knowledge was considerable—his acquaintance with mankind indeed was scanty; he had only moved amongst the excellent of the earth; but this, while it might expose him to certain inconveniences, gave him this advantage—that he appeared in all the native ingenuousness of unsuspecting youth. His love of study was great, which insured a constant supply of interesting materials for his public ministry—whilst he possessed a facility, an ease, an elegance, in the communication of his thoughts, displayed by few. To all these, he added the graces of the Spirit in no common degree—the glorious attributes of a soul eminently devoted to God—a solemn awe of his sacred office—an habitual reference to the final account he should be called to render—and an ardent zeal for the Redeemer's glory! Such was Spencer when he entered on the duties of his stated ministry!

But I shall justify this sketch of his character by some extracts from his letters.

In one dated Brighton, January 9th, 1811, he says—

"I dread the termination of the happiness I now enjoy. It will be the commencement of a long and agonizing separation. Oh! that henceforth I may live more devotedly to God than I have ever yet done. I can truly say this is my desire; for to be a preacher of the gospel, and not to feel its *due abiding* influence on the heart, is awful indeed. Since I have been here I have trembled for myself, when I have recollected the numerous follies of the four years I have spent at Hoxton. The Lord pardon me, and teach me to be more holy. Pray for me. Affectionately yours, ———"

Mr. Spencer is certainly a striking example of what some persons are unwilling to admit—the possibility of a close and humble walk with God, even amid the snares and temptations of an academy. That in colleges, even the best regulated, temptations to levity exist, cannot be denied. Where many young men, of a lively turn of mind, are associated, it must be so. But although such a spirit may be partially, and at intervals encouraged—yet where there is true piety, the mind will be elevated above their *habitual* influence, and occasional instances of failure will excite to diligence for the future, whilst they awaken deep regret and poignant sorrow for the past. If to this there was a natural tendency in Spencer's constitution, how sweetly is the influence of better principles displayed in the humility with which he confesses and deplores his error. If upon this page the eye of a cold, phlegmatic, stern professor should dwell, let it not be averted in disgust, when it beholds this amiable youth's confession of an error, of a temptation to which he is incapable—and to others, if such there be, who happy to discover in such a character, any thing like the shadow of a fault, should be preparing to pronounce a censorious and malignant judgment, I would say—"*Let him that is without sin cast the first stone.*"

The following letter was written the day after his arrival in Liverpool.

XXXII.

TO MR. JOHN HADDON.

Liverpool, February 2d, 1811.

"My dear friend—I am safely arrived at the scene of my future labors. My journey, though long, was far less irksome than any one I have before undertaken. The roads were bad; this made us late in our arrival at Liverpool. We did not reach it till a quarter before twelve last night. The short time that I have yet spent here has been quite *pleasant*—it has been *happy*. The serious people of the congregation have already paid me many kind and Christian attentions. With the blessing of the Master whom I serve, I expect to-morrow to spend a very delightful Sabbath. My best feelings for the glory of our Lord and the increase of his kingdom, will I hope be more strongly excited than ever they have yet been. I cannot but think that the Head of the Church has some great work to accomplish in Liverpool, and the desire of my heart is that I may be the instrument employed to effect it. Oh! for a large measure of the influence of the blessed Spirit to render me ardently pious, and to keep me zealous in my endeavors to do good to souls. I know *here* are numbers who *pray* earnestly for me, and whilst these pious people besiege the throne of grace on my behalf, I will not fear that my God will desert me. To be holy and to be useful at this moment, appears to be the first wish of my heart. Do you say, 'indulgent God let it be accomplished!'

"I am tired with my journey and pressed for time. Believe me in the bonds of Christian affection, Sincerely yours,

"Thomas Spencer."

According to his anticipation, he did enjoy on the Sabbath a happy day, although in the morning he was considerably agitated by the peculiarly solemn circumstances of his new and most responsible situation. In the morning his text was admirably adapted to the occasion. Gen. xxviii. 22—"*And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, if God will be with me, and keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace: then shall the Lord be my God, and this stone which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God's house, and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee.*" In the evening he preached from 1 Cor. xv. 49, "*And as we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.*" In the course of the ensuing week, he wrote as follows:

XXXIII.

Liverpool, Feb. 7, 1811.

"Oh! what a memorable day to me was the first Sabbath I spent in this place; every circumstance that took place appeared worthy of attention and big with events; never before had I entered a pul-

pit, with those awful, solemn feelings with which I was impressed that morning. The idea of appearing in a new character, of entering on a station which I have no view of relinquishing till the day of my death; the weight of responsibility which attaches to the ministerial character; the dread lest I should act in any way unworthy of my sacred office; all these things would naturally impart an unusual solemnity to the mind. On that day heaven is my witness of the holy resolutions I formed. Oh that God may ever enable me to put them in execution."

The attention which his labors had excited, while an occasional supply, was repeated, now that he had commenced his stated ministry. Soon the chapel became again crowded to excess. The town was filled with his praise—the most respectable of the inhabitants were perpetually disappointed in their attempts to hear him, not being in any way able to gain admittance to the chapel, so excessive was the throng. His coming seemed to be the commencement of a new era in the religious interests of Liverpool—at least amongst the dissenters. The prejudices of many were gradually subdued. The tone of public sentiment, with respect to that class of Christians amongst whom he labored, considerably raised. Many, by no means anxious to conceal their opposition to his principles, were compelled to pay a just, though reluctant tribute to the fascinations of his eloquence; and many whom the fame of that eloquence brought beneath the sound of his voice were savingly converted unto God; and of these, some are at this moment honorable members of the church of which he was the pastor. So far from being elated by his popularity, and rendered vain by the uncommon attention he excited and received from all ranks—every Sabbath, while he grew in public estimation, he seemed to sink in his own esteem, in humble acknowledgments of his own unworthiness, and in a yet deeper sense of his awful obligations. The next is an extract of a letter to his father.

XXXIV.

Liverpool, Feb. 26, 1811.

"I assure you I have every reason to believe, that this is the sphere in which Infinite wisdom intends me to move. My congregation is vast every time I dispense the word of life. A general spirit of hearing seems excited in this large town—the prospect is in every respect encouraging, and I am induced to hope, that great good will be done. I feel the awful responsibility that attaches to my employment; and when I recollect the multitude of souls committed to my care, I tremble, and exclaim, '*Who is sufficient for these things?*' I often think how different is my situation now, to what it was when I lived at my father's house. I am called to an active and laborious scene. Once it was enough for me just to execute your wishes, and then in the quiet enjoyment of our own family circle to experience satisfaction and comfort. Now God has blessed me by making me a blessing to others. May he preserve me faithful, and make me an honorable and holy Christian!"

In another letter to his father, dated April the 9th, 1811, he says—

"The interest excited in this town is still lively and great. I trust much good is done. Prejudices are removed, convictions are impressed on the mind, and the cause of Satan appears to tremble under the influence of the doctrines of the cross."

This is indeed a portrait worthy the attention of the candidate for the Christian ministry—the student and the minister. It is charming to behold such excellence, so universally applauded, veiled from its own observation by such deep humility. Some have indulged in speculations on the probable influence of Spencer's popularity upon his character, had he been spared. It is *possible* that its influence might have been injurious; he was a *man*, though he was a *Christian*. But it is ungenerous and unjust to his memory to cherish any gloomy suspicions on the subject, when, long as he *did* live, he sustained the Christian character with unsullied purity, and descended to the grave the same holy, humble, and devoted youth, as when emerging from the obscurity of his birth, the world first witnessed his unfolding powers.

To the extracts already made, illustrative of his humility, I shall add another—which as it is without date, may be well introduced here.

XXXV.

TO A MINISTER.

"I have at length taken up my pen to return you my sincere acknowledgments for the lively interest you take in my welfare and happiness, and especially for the excellent advice you have given me, as to the faithfulness of my preaching, and the circumspection necessary in my conduct. Oh! never may I be left to indifference in the statement of those glorious truths, which may well demand the glowing fervor of our souls, since their importance is declared to us by the blood of the Lamb! May the same Saviour be honored by my feeble ministrations, whom I know you delight to extol. You have been long engaged in endeavoring to give Him a high place in the affections—and a throne in the hearts of the people. This, however, is a glorious cause, in which I have but lately embarked; yet may the same Holy Spirit, who has enabled the heralds of salvation in every age to testify of Jesus, make *my* tongue ever to tell his excellence, warm my heart to feel his love, and influence my conduct to show forth his praise! I think I hear you add, Amen!"

The following is also without date:—

XXXVI.

TO —— ——.

Liverpool.

"My dear friend—I earnestly wish for you the support and the care of our constant and unchangeable friend, the Lord Jesus Christ: every day seems to convince me of the necessity and the happiness of a close walk with God: let us be always trusting in God, and praying to him, and there is no doubt but he will preserve and bless us. I was much pleased with an instance of resignation to the Divine will I lately met with. A pious and valuable member of our congregation lost his property, to a considerable amount, by an alarming fire. I was with him soon after it happened, and it would have done you good to have heard him say, with so much calm and sacred acquiescence as he discovered, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." I could not but wish that in all times of trial, I and my friends might have the same God to strengthen and fortify the mind as he had. Indeed you were mistaken, my worthy friend, when you judged my letter to you an expression of joy at separation from my friends. No, no. There is not a heart in the world that feels more truly and sincerely on such occasions than my own; but I wish ever to remember the great object of my existence, and of my call to the ministry—not selfish ends but the glory of my God; and when he commands, whatever flesh and blood might suggest, or carnal wishes desire, I must immediately obey. It is this thought, and the persuasion that I am employed in the vineyard of the

Lord, *just according to His will*, that give me composure and peace of mind; and I can witness that prayer unloads and eases the mind as much at Liverpool as any where else. Here I hope I have felt such salutary convictions of the awful responsibility of my work, as I never knew before, and as I hope I shall never forget; and happy am I to find, that *here* there are many of the Lord's jewels, his choicest favorites, many who call on the name of the Lord Jesus, both theirs and ours, out of a pure heart and faith unfeigned. In our prayer meeting, I have enjoyed a heaven begun below, and that kind of devotion which can well repay me for the sacrifices I have made. I suppose you have heard of the prospects of usefulness which open themselves before me; may I have grace to improve every hour of my time to the service of my God, and to maintain that holiness and integrity of conduct which will recommend the glorious gospel I proclaim. According to my arrangements, I expect to be in town in May. Remember me affectionately to our friends. I often think of the pleasant opportunities we have enjoyed together, and often wish you resided here. Whenever you see Mr. H———, of W———, give my respects to him. I highly esteem him, because he discovers much of the image and spirit of Christ; and these are excellencies which must be loved by us, if we are Christians, wherever we find them. May the God of peace be with you, and ever keep you near himself. Pray for me, that I may have all needful grace and assistance. Write as soon as possible, and ever view me

"Your affectionate friend,

"Thomas Spencer."

But scarcely had Spencer entered on the full discharge of his public duties at Liverpool, when severe affliction in the endeared circle of his connections at Brighton called him to that place. A letter written about this period, displays the agonized state of his feelings—but abounds with expressions of holy acquiescence in the Divine dispensations. He left Liverpool on the 18th of March, accompanied by the valued friend, under whose roof he still resided, and whose guest he was during his first visit. Arrived in London, the following hasty note bespeaks the anguish of his mind.

Ludgate street, Tuesday night.

"My dear friend—This moment I am within a few doors of you, but cannot reach you. Mr. H—— is with me: we have just got in from Liverpool, and start for B. to-morrow, at seven o'clock in the morning. I shall write to you from Brighton. Pray for me: I am in unutterable distress. Farewell!

"T. Spencer."

The Sabbath after his arrival in Brighton, he did not engage in any public service. Much of the day doubtless was spent in administering comfort to the afflicted. The fears which he had sometimes been induced to harbor, were not, however, realized; health slowly returned. His friend was under the necessity of hastening to Liverpool, after the lapse of a few days—but Mr. Spencer remained at Brighton. His affectionate heart dictated the following letter, to welcome his friend on his arrival home.

XXXVII.

TO MR. H———.

Brighton, Thursday morning.

"My dear and valued friend—I am pleasing myself with the idea, that before this reaches Liverpool, you will have shared the hearty and affectionate welcome of a beloved and happy family: this is a blessing which you know how to improve and enjoy aright, and for which I am persuaded you will express the sincerest gratitude to the God of our mercies. May the same kind and watchful Providence, which has I trust led you to your home in peace and safety, also preserve and defend me, that I may be again restored to the church and congregation at Newington, and be enabled to pursue a course of active and useful labor in the service of the Master whom I hope I really love.

"I frequently think that by this visit to Brighton on so mournful an occasion, I shall be better fitted to sympathize with the afflicted in general, and be taught how to commend them to God. Before this I had not been at all familiar with scenes of sorrow and distress. In the two sick rooms you visited last Monday evening, I have learned lessons which I shall never forget, and the benefit of which may probably be communicated to the church of Christ, as well as to myself.

"Our Redeemer himself, in order to be rendered a merciful and compassionate high-priest, was '*tempted like as we are*;' endured the various ills and sorrows that flesh is heir to; and hence (oh! blessed sympathy and kind relief) he is able to succor them that are tempted.

"Next Sabbath morning I intend to preach at the Countess' chapel, and in the evening at Mr. Styles': pray for me, that I may be supported and blest. It is still my design to reach Liverpool on Friday night: tell our friends, that they may expect to see me in the pulpit on the following Sabbath. May I be there richly laden with the good things of the kingdom;—may I be animated by a mind fraught with rich and heavenly favors. I am sure that if my God restores those who are so dear to me to perfect health and strength, my heart, hard as it is, will not be insensible to the feeling of gratitude. No;—it will leap as doth a hart; it will pant with the sensations of unutterable joy. I have received a very kind letter from our worthy friend, Mr. N. H.———; do tell him it afforded me real pleasure, and give him my hearty thanks for his solicitude for my happiness. I hope you are going on well with the new chapel business; if possible, let us make Satan tremble; against the kingdom of darkness let us use the most active and unwearied exertions, and God shall bless us in our deed. I wish I could have attended the meeting of the Bible Society; my absence however, was unavoidable. Give my affectionate regards to my dear friend Mrs. H——— and to your dear children. I hope I shall soon see you all happy and well. Your unremitting kindness to me has produced impressions upon my mind which will never be obliterated. I shall be happy again to mix with your family circle, and to occupy my own pulpit. To the hearers at Newington I intend to show my regard and best wishes, by constantly laboring in their service.

"I am more than ever yours,

"Thomas Spencer."

The uncommon attention excited in Liverpool by Mr. Spencer's ministry, soon suggested the necessity of providing more accommodation than Newington chapel could afford, for the numbers who were anxious to enjoy the benefit of his stated labors. At first the idea of enlarging the old place of worship presented itself; but some difficulties arising, this was relinquished, and early in March it was resolved, that a chapel capable of accommodating two thousand persons should be erected—a committee of management was appointed—and an eligible spot of ground soon selected for the purpose. A most judicious plan for the building was proposed and adopted—the dimensions of which were thirty-two yards long outside, and twenty-one yards and a half broad outside. A liberal subscription was soon obtained, and the affair was in a state of such

forwardness on his return from Brighton, that on the 15th of April, Mr. Spencer laid the first stone of the chapel, in the presence of an immense assembly—computed to consist of about six thousand persons. On that truly interesting occasion, he delivered an appropriate address, and solemnly dedicated the place to God by prayer.*

About this time Mr. Spencer removed from the hospitable abode of his early friend, with whom he had resided on his first coming to Liverpool, in order to lodge with Mr. Thurstan Lassel, in the Park Road; a pleasant situation, about half a mile from the town. It was the lot of Spencer to be beloved in every circle which he entered—and none who were honored to behold his excellence, and enjoy his friendship, ever resigned him, without feelings of the deepest regret. I cannot deny myself the pleasure of extracting a sentence or two from the willing testimony which that friend has borne to the sterling worth of his most amiable guest. I am the more anxious to do this, as it will unveil his character in private life, and show us, what he was as the member of a family.

"We had the great advantage of Mr. Spencer's pious conversation and fervent prayers in the family for near four months, for he did not leave us till the latter end of April; it was indeed a pleasant, and I trust, a profitable season, which we often review with great delight. With what pleasing emotions have we often surrounded our domestic altar, and witnessed the fervor of his addresses to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. In this delightful employ, he never seemed to engage with half a heart, his whole soul was alive to the service of his God: he was serious in a serious cause, nor did any circumstances that arose ever seem to unfit him for the discharge of religious duties. Morning and evening he generally engaged in prayer at family worship; the variety he produced on these occasions has often astonished us; it was impossible to trace any thing like repetition, every prayer seemed quite new, and gave fresh proof of the powers of his mind, and the ardor of his soul.

"Mr. Spencer naturally possessed an amiable disposition, and was innocently cheerful; no one could say that gloom or melancholy was connected with his religion. In his manners he was simple and unaffected; any thing like ostentation or parade he disliked exceedingly; he would always, if possible, avoid mixing with large parties. The company of serious, pious, plain Christians was his delight. He was kind, generous, and tender-hearted; the wants of the poor and necessitous he was ready and willing to relieve; 'to do good and communicate he forgot not, knowing that with such sacrifices God is well pleased.'"

But whilst all around him was prosperous and happy—whilst his ministry was successful beyond his most sanguine expectations; and hundreds were eager to administer to his comfort; his heart was the victim of anxiety and grief. The continued and alarming indisposition of his friends at Brighton, inspired his delicate and susceptible mind with the most gloomy and agonizing fears. It was well. His Heavenly Father saw he needed some thorn in the flesh, under the circumstances of his unexampled popularity, to prevent his being exalted above measure—and to preserve his soul in a frame of holy solemnity, and humble reliance on himself. Lest the sun of his prosperity should dazzle him too much, these friendly clouds were permitted to intervene. Their salutary influence may be traced in the following letter:—

* For the oration delivered at the foundation of the chapel—and also for an account of the services performed at its opening in May, 1812—see Appendix, No. V.

XXXVIII.

TO MR. JOHN HADDON.

Liverpool, April 16, 1811.

"My dear friend—The melancholy state of depression in which I have been held so long, must form my excuse for neglecting the sacred duties of friendship, in not writing before this to you. Oh! how soon can Jehovah blast our hopes of happiness from creature comforts, to convince us of the uncertainty of all earthly good! We *must* 'walk by faith,' and live in the exercise of a lively hope, that we shall obtain a better and more permanent rest. I scarcely dare, for my own part, anticipate any other kind of happiness on earth, but what may arise from communion with the Saviour, and the delightful work in which I am engaged, which, I must say, amidst all my trials affords me increasing happiness and pleasure. Thanks be to God, the work of the Lord is prospering in my hand; and though I may not have much pleasure in this world myself, I hope I shall be the means in the hands of the Holy Spirit, of putting into the possession of my fellow creatures, real and substantial felicity; *this*, the gospel I am enabled to preach is sent to confer. The next week I expect to go to my lodgings. I shall reside in a retired, rural and delightful spot, with a family (three only in number) who belong to the congregation in which the Lord has graciously called me to labor; it is about half a mile from the town, away from all bustle and noise, commanding a most delightful and enchanting prospect of both land and water. My study affords a most extensive view of fields and hills, the river and the adjacent county, (Cheshire.) I am persuaded it is every thing I could wish for as a plan for my residence. In that pleasant study* I expect to spend much time, and enjoy some degree of pleasure; and my dear friend will believe me when I assure him, that amidst the afflictions which our righteous Father judges the best schools for me, it would tend to alleviate my sorrows, and cheer my spirits, could he be in my new study, and as he did in my old one, occasionally spend an hour or two with me in social chat.

"Yesterday I laid the foundation stone of my new chapel, gave an address upon the spot, and dedicated the place to God in solemn prayer. The auditory consisted of not less than five thousand people, who were all fixed in their attention. May I, on that ground, often find a solace for my cares, in the public worship of God! May he bless the undertaking! May his eyes and his heart be there perpetually!

"Farewell, I *must* break off by assuring you, that I am sincerely yours,

"Thomas Spencer."

The week following that in which he laid the foundation stone of the new chapel, Mr. Spencer made an excursion into the country, and preached on

* To me it is a melancholy reflection, that I should so soon become the occupier of a spot in which he had fondly pictured to himself so many years of pleasure. In his own study; on his own table; in his own chair; I am now drawing up these memoirs of his life; around me are the fruits of his short but laborious exertions; and immediately before my eyes the path by which he descended to his grave! From every object within my view, I am admonished "*work whilst it is day, for the night cometh, when no man can work.*" I would that every loiterer in the vineyard of Christ were attended by mementos such as these.

the Tuesday evening at *Darwen*, and on the Thursday evening at a meeting of ministers at *Blackburn*.

During this journey, he suffered much from the complaint to which he was subject; but although laboring under the pressure of severe indisposition, in the pulpit he rose superior to the influence of languor and pain; and his exertions on that journey are still spoken of by those who witnessed them, and they were many, with delight.

On his return to Liverpool, Mr. Spencer received a melancholy summons to Chester, to attend the funeral of his early and amiable friend, the Rev. Ebenezer White, and to deliver the oration at his grave. His obligations and attachment to that excellent man have already been recorded. When arrived at the scene of death, his delicate mind seemed overwhelmed in an agony of grief. He stood weeping in unutterable distress over the cold remains of his departed friend. His bosom formed for friendship, and even then the seat of no ordinary sorrow, was ill prepared to sustain the pressure of a stroke, by which he was suddenly bereft of one who had discharged for him the relations of the father, the tutor, and the friend! Mr. Walter White, who was the witness of his grief, has thus described it:—"I shall not easily forget this dear young man's behavior on the evening preceding my brother's funeral at Chester. We were standing together by the side of the coffin, viewing the corpse—he wept excessively, and clasping his hands with great emotion, exclaimed, 'Oh! that I may but finish my course like him!' and turning to me, he said with his usual energy, 'Oh! what a fine thought it is, that the *bodies* of the saints are purchased by Christ as well as their souls.' And then passing his friendly hand gently over my brother's face, he said, with great emphasis, 'This body is the purchase of Christ: it cannot be lost—it must revive again—all these limbs must resume their activity. Oh! with what fine sentiments and ideas does the Christian religion furnish us to what any of the heathen systems did!'"

Though excessively agitated in his whole frame, he yet sustained himself to deliver at the grave a funeral oration, characterized by tender and solemn eloquence—the eloquence of feeling and of piety.

His letters to his friends for some time after this event, contain occasional allusions to the death of Mr. White—and in a way which proves how much he loved him—how deeply he deplored his loss. In one he says—

"I have lately been visiting a scene of death at Chester: my worthy friend Mr. White is now no more in this world; but I doubt not, he shines illustriously in another state of existence. When I was eleven years of age he came to Hertford, and used to spend a great deal of time with me; ah! little did I then think I should have to deliver a funeral address at his interment, and so far away too from the place with which we were then familiar. Peace to his ashes, and eternal joy to his departed spirit! and ere long may I meet him in that blessed state, where disappointments will no longer be his lot or mine."

On the Sabbath evening following, Mr. Spencer preached a funeral sermon for his friend, in his own pulpit at Liverpool, from Deut. xxxiv. 5, "*So Moses, the servant of the Lord, died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord.*" The sermon was solemn and impressive. Thus we record the mortality of others, and drop into eternity ourselves. On that Sabbath evening three months, his own funeral sermon was preached in the same pulpit.

The following letter was written the day before the funeral of Mr. White:—

XXXIX.

TO MR. HADDON.

May 13th, 1811.

"My dear friend—I am ashamed when I think of the length of time which has passed since I last wrote to you; but indeed since then I have scarcely written to any one, so much have I been occupied. What a beautiful and admirable narrative is the Dairyman's Daughter; if you can, get me two hundred of them, and send me the very first opportunity: they are just the kind of publication I want for several of my hearers. Procure me too some of the Negro Servant, and of all the interesting modern tracts, which your own discretion may suggest. The Rev. Ebenezer White, of Chester, has entered into the joy of his Lord. He was formerly settled at Hertford. I knew him, and highly esteemed him. I am going to his funeral. Oh! how uncertain is human life! how necessary that habitual frame of piety which the Holy Spirit can impart to his believing favorites! May we both enjoy the sanctity of religion, love it for its *purity*, and be enabled to discern its holy excellencies! then we shall show that our regeneration is real, and our hope of heaven well supported. God is showing me more and more of the uncertainty of all things here, and the necessity of living the blessed life of faith upon the Son of God, who, I sometimes think I can say, "*loved me*, and gave himself for me." I study a good deal, and find increasing pleasure in it. In visiting, as yet I have done but very little. The families I am most intimate with, are the *serious*, the pious followers of Christ; for I find that these alone can help me to comfort under my own trials, or in any way do me real good. But I know I must not be selfish. I must labor to do good in any way I can possibly think of.

"I am much pleased with my lodgings; the situation is so retired and beautiful, that it is every thing I can wish. I doubt not but you continue to pray for me, and I need your prayers. I feel the awful responsibility of my work, and my own unfitness for it. I long to "*present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.*" Remember me affectionately to all our friends.

"I am sincerely yours,

"Thomas Spencer."

Mr. Spencer seemed now to become more and more interested in his important work; the scenes of every day appeared to present it to his mind in some new and interesting light. The powers of his soul were absorbed in its concerns. He could think and speak of nothing else. In the pulpit, or in preparations for it—in serious conversation with his friends—or in the chambers of the diseased and dying, he was at home. He lived but for the discharge of his high obligations; and in the prosecution of his arduous work he was both useful and happy. With astonishing rapidity his character and talents ripened. He seemed to grow daily in favor both with God and man. All that *saw* him, admired him, there was something so engaging in his manner—all that *heard* him, respected and revered him, so serious and important were the truths which he delivered—all that *knew* him, loved him, for his was every amiable quality that could excite and retain the best affections of the human heart.

Valuable as our public institutions for the education of students for the Christian ministry really are, they can afford but an inadequate conception of the complicated duties of the pastoral office. The work of the pulpit is perhaps, after all, not the most difficult or trying part of the pastor's employ—and the reason why so many fail when called into active service in the church of God, is probably

this, that they never calculated upon one half of the engagements which then press upon their regard. They had formed a most incorrect estimate of the numerous claims which the office of the ministry involves, upon their time—their talents—their patience—and their faith. They had imagined, that in the composition and delivery of sermons was the chief of their labor—and that when this duty was discharged by far the heaviest burden was removed. The visitation of the sick, with all the peculiar delicacy, prudence, affection, and faithfulness which it requires—the consolation of the distressed, with all the caution and skill which the varieties of their grief demand—the reproof and admonition of the irregular, with all the mingled tenderness, constancy and fidelity, which, in such difficult cases, must be exercised—the care of the young, with that adaptation of temper and manner to their capacities which, in the work of catechising, familiar conversation or public instruction, is absolutely necessary—the advising, comforting and relieving the distressed, the embarrassed, and the indigent, who all press to him for counsel, solace and relief;—these, and unnumbered other duties connected with the pastoral office, are perhaps but seldom contemplated with sufficient seriousness amid the exercises of a college. And even in the *public* engagements of ministry, the circumstances of the *pastor* differ materially from those of the *student*. The pulpit compositions of the student are *general;* those of the pastor must be *particular*. The student has no individual case to suit; the congregation to whom he preaches are strangers to him; the pastor has as many cases as there are people committed to his charge. The student can select his topics, and adapt his preaching to the tone of his mind—or if peculiar reluctance should be felt, may enjoy the repose he wishes, and not preach at all; but the pastor *must* appear at the stated hours of worship, whatever be the frame and temper of his soul. Often he is called to the discussion of subjects but ill adapted to his feelings; and it becomes his duty to administer consolation to others which *his* bleeding bosom needs, but cannot take. He must sometimes cover with a smiling countenance an aching heart; and his lips must exhort to tranquillity and confidence in God, whilst over his own spirit broods the cloud of anxiety and sorrow! Happy shall I be if the perusal of these imperfect memoirs tend to excite in the breast of any a spirit of Christian sympathy and prayer for the ministers of the gospel; or if these statements of the labors and anxieties of their office, shall induce those to pause and count the mighty cost, who may be thoughtlessly pressing forward to the arduous work. Let such remember the worth of souls—the guilt of becoming accessary to their ruin—and the solemn account all must render at the bar of God, who have taken upon themselves the responsibility of seeking, by every possible method, to promote their eternal interests.

These considerations seemed ever present to the view of Spencer. The feelings of an affectionate and faithful pastor's heart breathe in every sentence of the following letter.

XL.

TO MR. HADDON.

Liverpool, May 31, 1811.

"My dear friend—You really must excuse my apparent neglect in not writing you before; but if you knew the number and pressing nature of my avocations, you would not wonder. I now feel, and deeply too, the dreadful responsibility of my employment. I have sick beds constantly to attend—a numerous congregation committed to my charge—a character to sustain, which ought ever to appear *free*, even from the very *appearance* of evil—and all this with the most depressed state of feelings, and but little experience of the arduous duties the course of the Christian ministry embraces. Often do I exclaim, '*who is sufficient for these things?*' Oh! that I may find that my sufficiency is of God. I am led at times to derive encouragement from the good which I trust the blessed Spirit has accomplished by my feeble labors; but then I think again of my youth, my inexperience, my exposure to the fiery darts of the wicked one, and the *possibility* of my eventually becoming '*a cast-away.*'

"Oh! there are many feelings of this painful class in my mind, which few can share, which I cannot dare frequently to communicate.

"All this and much more, do I daily feel. I wish you were with me. I could say a thousand things I cannot write, and you might console me with the comforts wherewith you yourself are comforted of God! Do pray for me, for I need it more than ever now. Often do I dispense to others that consolation I cannot take myself.

"Thank you a thousand times for Cecil. Oh! they are admirable; what a character was he. Oh! that the Head of the Church would but make me like him. The tracts are just what I wanted; may a Divine blessing attend the distribution of them Farewell!

"I am yours affectionately,

"Thomas Spencer."

In another letter he writes:

"Cecil's works are a high treat indeed: you cannot think how I enjoy the perusal of them. There are such valuable hints for ministers—such inestimable directions, that I hope I shall evince the benefit of reading them, to the last hour of the day in which I am appointed to work!"

The church and congregation at Liverpool now became anxious for Mr. Spencer's ordination, and Thursday the 27th of June was appointed for that solemn service. In the following letter he announced it to his early friend and patron, Mr. Wilson, whose presence on that occasion he earnestly desired.

XLI.

TO THOMAS WILSON, ESQ.

Liverpool, June 4, 1811.

"My dear sir—I am happy to inform you, that Thursday, June the 27th, is the day appointed for my ordination. Will you allow me to expect the pleasure of your presence and society on that solemnity? If you were here, you would be pleased with my prospect of usefulness, and you would be able to suggest some hints to our friends about the new chapel. Little things are apt to be neglected, and their neglect, though apparently trifling, would spoil the whole concern. We may well congratulate each other on the triumph the dissenters have obtained over an intolerant and oppressive spirit. They have imagined a vain thing: the Lord reigneth, let the people tremble. You know the great depression of spirits under which I have for some time labored; may the Lord appear a present help in this time of trouble. The walls of Zion are to be built, it appears, in troublous times, for such they are to me; yet I would submissively commit my cause to God; he may ordain that the benefit of his church, and the good of others, shall be promoted by the ills I endure. You know poor White, of Chester, has received the end of his faith—the salvation of his soul; I delivered the oration over his grave. Mr. Fletcher, of Blackburn, preached his funeral sermon. We are all dying creatures,

hastening to the world of immortality. I think that lately the world has appeared to me in its true light—"*it passeth away.*" May we by every dispensation of Providence be rendered more meet for the inheritance of the saints in light: in due time may we be clothed upon with our house, which is from heaven. Present my kind respects to Mrs. and Miss Wilson. I hope you will try to visit Liverpool by the time mentioned. Wishing much to see you, I remain, dear sir,

'Affectionately yours,

"THOMAS SPENCER."

The day of ordination at length arrived. The chapel in which Mr. Spencer preached being but small, that service, which, amongst dissenters of the congregational order, is remarkably solemn, was performed at the chapel in Byrom-street, Liverpool, which was handsomely granted to the people at Newington chapel for that special purpose. It was indeed an interesting day. The services were commenced by the Rev. Mr. Evans, of Stockport, who read suitable portions of Scripture, and implored the Divine blessing upon the sacred engagements of the day. The Rev. Joseph Fletcher, M. A., of Blackburn, then delivered an admirable introductory discourse, and received from Mr. Spencer his confession of faith, together with answers to the questions usually, on such occasions, proposed to the minister to be ordained;* Mr. Spencer then kneeling down, surrounded by his fathers and brethren in the ministry, the Rev. John Cockin, of Halifax, offered up, with deep solemnity, the ordination prayer, accompanied by the imposition of hands. To this act of ordination succeeded a most impressive and affecting charge from the Rev. William Hordle, of Harwich, Mr. Spencer's former tutor and friend. The passage on which this excellent address was founded was Col. iv. 17. "*Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it.*" The Rev. Mr. Roby, of Manchester, preached to the people of Mr. Spencer's charge, upon the duties which devolved on them in the relation that day publicly recognized, from Gal. iv. 18, "*It is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing.*" The service was throughout most affecting and impressive; it was characterized by a peculiar solemnity, both in the feelings of the ministers and the people. The tender frame and delicate mind of Spencer was nearly overwhelmed by the awful considerations which then pressed upon him. Had the melancholy event which so rapidly succeeded this interesting service been at that time certainly announced, a seriousness more suitable to the occasion could hardly have been inspired; and indeed in Mr. Hordle's charge there were passages which in the sad sequel of this history appear most singularly appropriate—bordering even on the prophetic! One in particular deserves to be recorded:—

"You, my dear young brother, must die, and stand at the bar of God. Your ordination service may be only a prelude to your funeral service, for what is man? Man is but of yesterday, and his days are as a shadow. How often have we seen the sun go down while it is yet day! and while the church has been pleasing itself with the prospect of enjoying the pious fervent labors of an endeared minister for years, has an unexpected stroke separated them for ever! Mourning survivors wondering have said, '*Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour.*'"

Too often such remarks as these are passed by unnoticed by the thoughtless—are merely considered as expletives to supply the want of other matter—or splendid furniture to decorate and give effect to the address. The anticipation, though founded in reason, warranted by Scripture, and authorized by experience, is yet unaccompanied by any just assurance of the event it realizes; and its connection with any special decree of God is concealed from mortals. But there are seasons when the lips of holy men seem to utter something more than those vague admonitions of death, which, from their frequent recurrence, or the uncertainty of their immediate accomplishment, lose their power to impress. And to those who admit the doctrine of divine influence upon the minds of men, and more especially upon such as are appointed to state and enforce the solemn doctrines of revelation to mankind, it can be no source of astonishment that God should sometimes direct the thoughts and expressions of his ministers into a current adapted to certain ends he has to answer, or particular events he intends shall shortly come to pass. With respect to the passage above cited, and its corresponding event, persons will form their own opinion. I cannot, however, but regard it as adding somewhat to the force and propriety of observations such as these, since here was another instance, in which the event anticipated by the speaker as *possible*, though at the time, perhaps, regarded by the hearers as highly *improbable*, was but too surely realized!

Mr. Spencer was now fully invested with that sacred office, which from his infancy he had desired; and he set himself diligently to the discharge of its momentous duties. That he felt its importance, was evident to all. His habitual conduct and conversation proved it. To his most intimate friends he freely expressed his anxieties respecting it, and earnestly did he implore an interest in the prayers of his people and his brethren in the ministry. In the assurance that he labored amongst a praying people, he felt confidence: and no consideration is more adapted to relieve the mind of a faithful minister than this—while it pours unseen a thousand blessings on his head, it secures to his labors an affectionate attention, and an earnest desire rightly to appreciate and improve them. That which persons make the subject of earnest prayer, they will usually value; and it is hardly possible but that good must be uniformly the result, when both minister and people come from their closets, which have witnessed their fervent intercessions for each other, to the house of God. The apostle knew how to estimate the prayers even of the meanest Christians who enjoyed his labors. "*Brethren, pray for us.*"* It is true that a people will for the most part take the cast of their religious character from that of their minister: if he be much alive to God, and zealous in the discharge of his ministry, he will communicate the sacred flame to all around him, and cause his people to reflect on every side the light his preaching and his example shed. But, on the other hand, are there no instances in which the reverse of this has been the case; the minister has been gradually disheartened and dispirited by a cold, supine, and worldly-minded people, who have continually thwarted him in his generous designs—counteracted his benevolent efforts—and quenched, by indifference and neglect, the ardor of his zeal. Instead of assisting him in his glorious work, they have hung like weights about his garments; and instead of acting as pioneers to prepare the paths

* For Mr. Spencer's confession of faith, &c., see Appendix, No. VI.

* See an admirable sermon upon this subject by the Rev. William Jay, of Bath, preached at the settlement of the Rev. Henry Forster Burder, A. M. at Hackney. Every pious minister, who knows its worth, must wish to see this excellent discourse in the hands of his people.

of Christian benevolence for his willing feet to tread, they have clogged up the avenues with obstacles, and lined the way with insuperable difficulties. The spirit of the man has been broken by perpetual disappointment—vexation has gradually enervated his mind—and by slow and imperceptible degrees he has sunk into torpor and indifference—and the languor of the pastor has at length presented an unhappy counterpart to the supineness of the people. And even where neither the cause nor the consequences obtain to so alarming and fatal degree, still it is to be deplored that any approach to them should be suffered to exist. Here the stated attendants on a gospel ministry may often find a reason for that want of pleasure and improvement which sometimes they deplore, though most unjustly, at the preacher's cost. If prayer, special and fervent, for a blessing on their pastor's labors, has been neglected, the mystery is at once developed. For they have no right whatever to expect a blessing without prayer; and as they have no *right* to expect it without prayer, neither are they in a suitable frame to receive it; and thus it often happens, that where the prayerless soul departs empty away, the humble and earnest petitioner obtains a rich and suitable supply from the same table, and of the same food. It is *light bread* to the one, but it is life-giving and substantial provision to the other. "*Ask and ye shall receive.*"

On the first Sabbath in July Mr. Spencer dispensed, for the first time, the solemn ordinance of the Lord's Supper. It was a time of love—a season of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. The sweet impression of that happy day still remains, and its memory is yet dear to many. On the following Monday at the social prayer meeting in the evening, in the bosom of his people, he again solemnly dedicated himself to God, and renewed his vows to consecrate all his powers to their service in the work of the ministry. Indeed, all he wrote, or said, or did, indicated the holy fervor of his soul. Tenderly alive to the sacred delicacy of his character, he was anxious to sustain it well, that the cause of Jesus might not suffer by any spots it might contract. Conscientiously awake to every call of duty which his most responsible station might involve, he was ready to obey them all—that the ministry might not be blamed! The following letter is from his correspondence about this time, and may be numbered with the last he ever wrote. The expressions which I have copied, are mingled with others sacred to the privacy of friendship. They promise pleasures never realized—unfold prospects suddenly destroyed—and record arrangements he was *not* permitted to fulfil!

XLII.

TO MR. HADDON.

Liverpool, July 8, 1811.

"My dear friend—

* * * * * * * *

"The ordination has, for the last fortnight, occupied almost the whole of my attention, and the impression, the solemn, the holy impression, of which I trust I shall never forget. Yesterday for the first time in my life, I administered the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, and found it to be indeed '*a time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord.*' My duties are more and more *important* and pressing. Conversations upon religious experience with candidates for admission into our church, the baptism of children, and the calls of the sick and dying, must necessarily engage much of my attention. But I can sincerely bless God, that amidst all the depression of mind I have suffered, my work has been my delight. The duties of the ministry have often refreshed, instead of oppressing me. The pleasure of the Lord has prospered in my hands. I love the service of the Head of the Church better than ever I did: when I am watering others, I find that Jehovah the Spirit waters my own soul too! Oh! is not this an encouraging token for good?——— In great haste,

"I am ever your affectionate friend,

"Thomas Spencer."

In the mean time, Mr. Spencer was not confined to his own pulpit. He gave his brethren in the ministry tokens of his affectionate regard, by officiating for them in their respective places: and he also made several excursions into the country. Mr. Spencer did not encourage the idea, that as he had become by voluntary consecration the minister of a *particular* church, the church in *general* had now lost every claim upon his kind attention. Nor were the people amongst whom he labored of a disposition so selfish and narrow, as to wish to confine his exertions exclusively to the spot they occupied. That the first and constant regards of a pastor are due to the people of his charge, none can dispute; but with the work of the pastor, to a certain extent, may with the greatest propriety be added that of an evangelist. There are surrounding districts that will often cry to him for help, which he is bound to render—there are destitute societies to whom he must minister consolation and instruction, in token of his brotherly love—and there are interchanges of friendship, which promote union, which relieve the mind, and which will ever be found beneficial to the churches by whom they are encouraged. Intercourse with society informs the judgment—corrects the views, and expands the mind. Long labor in one appointed sphere, however important and delightful the duties it involves, and especially where all the powers of the mind are ever on the stretch, must produce at length weariness, sameness, monotony. A visit to another scene—intercourse with other connections—refreshes and revives the wasted spirits and the weary frame. And the church, however they may value their pastor's ministry and regret his absence, will not eventually be losers by the temporary privation they may suffer.

But we must, however reluctant, pass on to the closing scenes of Mr. Spencer's life. As his death was sudden, I have none of those sayings or sentiments to record which occupy the last pages of most biographical sketches of departed saints; and yet his friends remember, with peculiar pleasure, in what a holy frame of mind he appeared to be during the whole of the week previous to his removal. If I should be more minute than may be deemed absolutely necessary in what remains of these important memoirs of this lovely youth, I trust that I shall be forgiven. I write for friendship; and to his friends it must afford peculiar gratification to follow him through all the scenes he visited, and mark the slightest movements of his mind during the last week of his residence on this earth.

On Sabbath day, July 28, being the day appointed for a collection for the new chapel, Mr. Spencer preached a most excellent sermon in the morning from Ezra ix. 8. "And now for a little space grace has been showed from the Lord our God to leave us a remnant to escape, and to give us a nail in his holy place, that our God may lighten our eyes, and give us a little reviving in our bondage." In the evening his text was Acts xiii. 26, "To you is the word of this salvation sent." On that day he exerted himself greatly, and complained much of a pain at his heart, but did not seem at night particularly fatigued. The following day he spent chiefly in conversation with his friends respecting the state of the church, and some candidates for communion who were to be visited and received during that

week—he dined at the house of a friend—in the afternoon visited the sick room of one of his members—and in the evening attended the prayer meeting at the chapel, when he recapitulated the outline of a sermon which had been preached on the Wednesday evening preceding, by the Rev. Mr. Davies, of London. His memory was remarkably retentive, and he gave in that exercise a proof of its powers, which astonished all that heard him. That evening he slept in Liverpool, and early on Tuesday morning he went with a friend to Prescot and laid the foundation stone of a new chapel there, and delivered an address adapted to the occasion, in the presence of a large assembly. From the ground he retired to the house of a gentleman in Prescot, whose child he then baptized, and so proceeded immediately to St. Helen's, a town about four miles distant, where he preached in the evening. On Wednesday afternoon he returned much fatigued to Liverpool, but preached in the evening with great animation, from a text selected for him, by one of the young persons of his church; Rev. xi. 2, "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love." The Rev. Mr. Wray, the missionary at Demerara, was then in Liverpool, and was at the chapel. A friend who saw Mr. Spencer in the vestry after service, observed him to be much exhausted, and heard him say, for the first time, "Oh! I did not feel comfortable in seeing a brother minister in the congregation this evening." Usually he did not fear the face of man. On Thursday, about noon, one of his deacons called upon him at his residence, and he was occupied the whole day with him in visiting those who were to be received into the church; his conversations with the respective candidates were truly admirable and appropriate, and such as will remain in the grateful memory of those who had the happiness to enjoy them. On Friday he was occupied until the afternoon in writing letters to his friends. I am able to present the reader with extracts from two of them.

August 2, 1811.

"I find growing pleasure in my ministerial employment; this evening I have to admit eight new members to church communion; indeed when I accepted this situation, I never conceived that I should have half the engagements or duties to attend to, which I now find must be accomplished, if I would merit the character of an active, useful minister of religion. I think my recent afflictions, and the solemn duties which now devolve upon me, have in a considerable degree chastened my character, and imparted, perhaps, a seriousness to my general deportment, which may prove highly advantageous to me in future life. How long this will *last* I cannot tell, but I think affliction adds a weight to a character nothing else does, and especially to young people and young ministers. I have lately been preaching in the villages round Liverpool. Oh! let us aim to glorify God and then trust all our concerns in his hands, that so at the last we may be accepted of him."

In another, to his father, he says:

"I was much hurt at the account of my mother's* illness; I hope no distressing circumstances have arisen, and by this time, perhaps I may indulge the idea that you are better yourself. Oh! how necessary that we should all seek a better country, since here there is so much change, affliction, and wo. May every trial be sanctified to us all, and we be meetened for the inheritance of the saints in light."

Having concluded his earthly correspondence with his distant friends, for ever,† he left his residence and resumed his pastoral visits amongst his people and the candidates who were to be that evening received. At the church meeting he was particularly lively; with holy joy he welcomed the new members into the communion of the church, and as he gave to each the right hand of fellowship, he addressed a short but most affectionate and solemn exhortation, admirably adapted to their respective ages, stations, and feelings.* Indeed, all the duties of the pastor's office were conducted by him with a propriety and an ease, which years of experience are frequently unable to supply. With the unaffected simplicity of youth, he tempered the dignity of age—he seemed to be at once at home in the duties of his new and important station—never embarrassed or confused; he appeared to have an intuitive perception of what belonged to his character and office, in every case as it arose; and following the inward suggestion, he acquitted himself well, and discharged with undeviating consistency the high responsibilities he bore.

After the meeting, Mr. Spencer spent the evening in serious conversation with a few friends; leading with great fervor the devotions of the family, and closing a day of sacred duties, with uncommon calmness and placidity of mind.

The following morning, Saturday, he spent in his study, in preparations for the pulpit. In the course of the day he wrote to a young lady, one of the number received, the preceding evening, into his church—at the close of the note he said—

"I suppose you anticipate to-morrow with feelings of solemnity; you will appear in a new light to the church of Christ, and the spectators of our holy solemnities; we shall share to-morrow Zion's chief feast. May the blessing of the God of ordinances be upon us all. Wishing you the enjoyment of per-

* His step-mother.

† His correspondence with his beloved and honored parent has been recently renewed. Spencer's father sleeps the sleep of death; his body rests in his bed, but his spirit walks in its uprightness. He was a venerable saint. Few have felt the pressure of trials such as his, and few have displayed a spirit more uncomplaining and resigned. He walked with God. Repeatedly before his departure he assured his family that he was going to glory. And on the 25th of December, 1812, his happy spirit was dismissed to the enjoyment of its rest.

* At the church meeting, with great emphasis, he gave out the following hymn, from Kelly's collection:

RECEIVING A MEMBER.

"Come in thou blessed of the Lord,
Enter in Jesus' precious name;
We welcome thee with one accord,
And trust the Saviour does the same.

Thy name, 'tis hop'd, already stands,
Mark'd in the book of life above:
And now to thine we join our hands,
In token of fraternal love.

Those joys which earth cannot afford,
We 'll seek in fellowship to prove;
Join'd in one spirit to our Lord,
Together bound by mutual love.

And while we pass this vale of tears,
We 'll make our joys and sorrows known,
We 'll share each other's hopes and fears,
And count another's care our own.

Once more our welcome we repeat;
Receive assurance of our love;
Oh! may we all together meet
Around the throne of God above."

fect health, and much communion with your best friend,

"I remain, &c.

"THOMAS SPENCER."

After dinner on the Saturday, the conversation turned upon a passage in Ezekiel—"*I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant;*" from which Mr. Spencer took occasion to speak much at large upon the nature and stability of the covenant of grace. In the evening he met the Rev. Messrs. Charrier, Lister, and Wray, the missionary, together with Mr. Laird, of Greenock, and others, at the house of a friend. It was a pleasant interview, and in reflection has afforded to the persons who composed that social party the sincerest pleasure. To his most intimate friends, it is a source of much satisfaction, that his pastoral engagements that week were such as every day to bring him into their society—so that they had constant intercourse with their departed friend—and passing with him from house to house can look back and say, "*Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us by the way, and opened unto us the Scriptures.*"—Like the companion of Elijah, they walked with him in close connection from spot to spot, charmed and edified with the holy strain of his discourse, and the rising lustre of his character; but all unconscious, that whilst they were thus conversing with him upon earth, *the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof* were preparing to conduct him triumphantly to heaven. But the scene closes rapidly upon us. On the last Sabbath of his life, August 4th, he rose with unusual health and spirits. The family with whom he resided always beheld him with peculiar interest on the morning of the Sabbath, such an air of angelic mildness and composure sat upon his countenance—and so deeply did he seem absorbed in the contemplation of the sacred duties of the day. That morning he preached from Jer. xxxi. 3—"*I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee.*" The way of his discussing the subject was simple and interesting: I have drawn thee—to the cross—to the throne—to the church—were the leading ideas in the discourse. It was particularly adapted to the occasion, so many new members being that day added to the church. He afterwards administered the Lord's Supper in a most solemn and affecting manner. Such as witnessed the scene—and the number of spectators was about three hundred—bear an unanimous testimony to the deep solemnity by which it was characterized. His appeals to the conscience were so close and overwhelming—his invitations to the faint and weary were so pressing and tender—his countenance—his voice—his whole manner were so expressive of holy fervor, that every eye was fixed—every heart seemed moved. How long the impression will remain I cannot tell; but the emotions enkindled by the transactions of that day are yet lively in the hearts of many—and numbers love to converse upon it, as one of those rare and highly favored seasons, in which the distance between earth and heaven seems annihilated—and so transporting is the joy, that *whether in the body or out of the body*, the happy Christian can scarcely tell! To a friend, who afterwards hinted that he appeared to be very happy in prayer at the Lord's Supper, he replied—"O yes; I thought I could have prayed, and prayed, and mounted up to heaven!" At the close of that memorable service—one, the ardor of whose feelings age had checked, observed, that "Mr. Spencer seemed that morning twenty years older in experience than he really was." At dinner he mentioned to the family, that he had received that morning a letter from a friend in London who had been formerly reluctant to his settlement in Liverpool, as though it were not the sphere designed by Providence for him. He then expressed the full conviction of his own mind, that he was precisely where he ought to be—under such an impression, he observed, that he was perfectly satisfied and happy; and added, "if it had not been the will of God, I should never have settled here."

In the evening, in the midst of a throng, such as is rarely witnessed, and from which hundreds departed unable to gain access, he preached from Luke x. 42, "*One thing is needful, and Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her.*" His chief object in this sermon was to show, that communion with the Saviour is the one thing needful. Throughout the whole discourse, it seemed as if all the powers of his mind, all the ardor of his soul were infused into his composition, and his delivery. In the application, he was uncommonly urgent with the young—earnestly exhorting them to an immediate decision on the side of Christ—representing to them the folly and the danger of deferring the important concerns of salvation and eternity to an uncertain futurity—and assuring them, that *very soon* he should meet them at the bar of God, and that there he should be a swift witness against them. By those who are best able to decide, it was observed, that his last sermon was perhaps the most adapted for usefulness of any he had preached—and this observation, which was made immediately after its delivery, has been since most amply confirmed, in instances perpetually presenting themselves, in which that sermon proved instrumental in effecting the happiest impressions, many of which have issued in a saving change.

After the labors of the day he went to the house of a friend to supper; he did not appear to be unusually fatigued. With great fervor he led the devotions of the family. He read a portion of Scripture, and gave out the 165th hymn of the 2d book. He was remarkably copious and earnest in prayer—commending especially to God—the family—the church—the members who had recently joined—the missionary, (who was present) and every object to which his holy and benevolent mind recurred. At supper the conversation was pure and spiritual—such as the book of remembrance in heaven preserves—such as will not easily be forgotten upon earth. The subject was sudden death. The countenance of Spencer, always animated, was lighted up with holy joy as he discoursed upon the glory of departed saints—he seemed to realize the scenes he attempted to describe, whilst he expressed his own conceptions of the transport and surprise in which the disembodied spirit will be lost, when first admitted to the immediate presence of God. He spoke much upon the blessedness of putting off the garments of mortality in a moment, and being caught up unexpectedly and instantaneously to heaven! He seemed to lose the memory of the day's fatigue in the interesting theme, and frequently observed, that he had not for a long time felt himself so free from weariness. A little after eleven, he parted with his friends for ever. Never did they discover more of the warmth of his friendship, or the ardor of his piety, than in this last, happy interview. His countenance seemed irradiated with smiles of ineffable benignity—his whole deportment indicated a mind abstracted from the world, except so far as bound to it by the benevolent desire of doing good, and wholly devoted to communion and fellowship with God. So mature indeed did his character appear—so ripe did he seem for glory, that some of his friends could not but entertain a presentiment of his early removal. Though not then elevated to a higher sphere, he still appeared mysteriously weaned from earth. His lops was

girt, and his lamp burning with unusual brightness, as though he expected the coming of his Lord. In its anticipations of future glory, his happy spirit seemed to try its pinions, preparatory to the glorious flight it was about to take.

On Monday morning, August the 5th, the last day that dawned for *him*, he rose rather later than usual; his mind was too active for his body; the exhausted frame required rest. After breakfast, he received a visit from a young lady, one of the members lately admitted into the church. He entered the room with a cheerful smile; and the family having retired after some general conversation, he said, "Well, M———, you are now a member of a Christian church; yesterday you solemnly professed your faith in Christ, while the attention of many of our fellow creatures was fixed on you; God also beheld your profession—all heaven and hell witnessed the solemnity." On her expressing some fears lest she should be unable to act consistently with the profession she had made, he replied, "Live near to Christ—be much in communion with your own heart—be very frequent in addresses at a throne of grace, and there is no fear of you." Then referring to the long and agonizing distress which he had suffered through the alarming indisposition of his dearest connections, and which seemed now happily removing, he said, "This severe affliction has not been sent, but for reasons the wisest and the best; from it I have learned many lessons, and have enjoyed much of the presence of God under it. O may my heart be filled with gratitude to Him who is the author of all our mercies." He frequently bathed; he found it beneficial to his health. He purposed doing so that day, and had expressed his intention in the morning. He had just repeated the first verse of Cowper's admirable hymn—

> "God moves in a mysterious way,
> His wonders to perform;
> He plants his footsteps in the sea,
> And rides upon the storm,"

when one of the family came into the room, and said, that if he intended bathing, it was time that he should go, as it would very soon be high water. He assented; but whilst a towel was being procured for him, he turned to his young friend, and said, "I can't tell how it is, but I don't feel so much inclined to go, to-day, as usual." She asked if it was thought good for his health—he answered "Yes, it will brace my nerves after the exertion of yesterday." And, indeed, he had an immediate object in view, for he had folded his paper, and prepared his pen, in order to compose a sermon to be preached in the course of the ensuing week, on behalf of the Religious Tract Society, in London; and he was anxious that, by bathing, his mind might be invigorated for study, as he had frequently observed it to have that pleasing influence. Mr. Spencer and his friend left the house together, when turning towards the water, he said, "I must go this way." They parted. His friend sought again the bosom of her family—he went the way whence he never returned!

The following pages of this history must be filled with weeping, and lamentation, and wo. They must detail as sad a catastrophe as ever humanity or religion mourned. With cheerfulness Mr. Spencer took the path which leads across the fields towards the Herculaneum potteries, a little above which it was his design to bathe. The eye of his friend, beneath whose roof he dwelt, followed him till distance hid him from his sight. Arrived at the spot which he had selected, not so much from a knowledge of the ground, as from the circumstance of its retirement, he asked a gentleman, who had been bathing, and who then was dressing, "if that was a good place to bathe at?"—he answered that it was, but that it was rather stony near the side, but better when further in. Mr. Spencer replied, "I rather think that it is a good place myself, and I don't like to bathe near the pottery, there are so many people." Mr. S. then asked again, "Is the tide nigh up?" to which he was answered, "About half past eleven." "Oh! dear," said Mr. Spencer, "it is near twelve." As this conversation passed, Mr. Spencer was undressing, and, at intervals, humming a tune. When undressed, he walked towards the water, and spoke to a workman belonging to the pottery, of the name of Potter, who also was bathing, and who directed him which way to come into the water. While walking in, Mr. Spencer observed, that it was very cold—to which Potter replied, "You will not find it so cold when in." Potter then plunged into the water about breast high, and when he next saw Mr. Spencer, he was swimming within his depth, but soon afterwards the tide swept him round an abrupt projecting rock, where the water was from six to seven feet. Potter himself, who is an expert swimmer, soon found the current driving him round the same rock; but he immediately, with difficulty, swam to the shore, when he looked about for Mr. Spencer, and, not seeing him, was much alarmed. At length, after the lapse of a minute or two, he saw the the top of his head floating above the surface of the water. Potter could not tell whether he was amusing himself or drowning. He however cried out to him; but receiving no answer, plunged in again, and swam to the rock, in order to render him assistance—but found it impossible—Mr. Spencer having sunk in seven feet water, and the currents being remarkably strong. Potter, with considerable trouble, and not till some time had elapsed, got up the side of the rock, and communicated the intelligence to Mr. Smith, of the potteries, who immediately ordered out two boats, which were directly manned and brought to the spot, when every exertion was made to find the body.

I have frequently examined the place; indeed, I take a mournful pleasure in visiting the scene; and I have sought the opinions of medical gentlemen respecting the *immediate* cause of Mr. Spencer's death. The spot is most unfavorable for safe and pleasant bathing. Whoever sees it at low water, is astonished that any person, acquainted with the nature of the shore, should venture there. There is a ridge of sharp and slippery rock, running in a curved direction, for many yards, into the water, and terminating abruptly; on either side of this most rugged ridge the fall is instantaneous, and from one to two feet. It is highly probable, then, that Mr. S. swimming, as was described, along by the shore, might bring himself up immediately on the edge of this treacherous rock, which being slippery, deceived him, and by suddenly precipitating him into deeper water, caused a spasmodic fear—a combination of instantaneous terror and spasm—which directly suspended the functions of life, and he sunk, without further agitation or conflict, in the arms of death.

> "So sinks the day-star in the ocean bed,
> And yet anon repairs his drooping head,
> And tricks his beams, and with new-spangled ore
> Flames in the forehead of the morning sky;
> So Lycidas sunk low, but mounted high,
> Through the dear might of him that walk'd the waves;
> Where, other groves and other streams along,
> With nectar pure his oozy locks he laves,
> And hears the unexpressive nuptial song,
> In the blest kingdoms meek of joy and love.
> There entertain him all the saints above,

In solemn troops and sweet societies,
That sing, and, singing in their glory, move,
And wipe the tears for ever from his eyes."

In the meanwhile, the gentleman whom Mr. Spencer first addressed, returned, and, discovering the sad event, apprized them that it was Mr. Spencer, the minister, who was lost. Potter renewed his exertions to find the body, assisted by the people in the boats, in which they at length succeeded, after it had been under water about fifty minutes. By this time the melancholy tidings had spread abroad; and happily some gentlemen of the faculty being in the neighborhood, and hearing of the event, hastened immediately to the spot, so that, ere the finding of the body, every thing was in readiness for instantly commencing the resuscitating process.

When drawn from the water, the body exhibited no symptoms of violence or struggle in the act of dying—the countenance was placid and serene—its features were perfectly undisturbed, and so lovely was its expression in death, that one of the medical attendants observed—a painter could not desire a finer object!

On the arrival of the body on the beach, the water was easily expelled, and being then wrapped up in flannel, it was immediately conveyed to the house of Mr. Smith, where, by the kind exertions of the family, every necessary arrangement had been made for its reception.

The apparatus having arrived from Liverpool, and three medical gentlemen being present to receive the body, the usual methods adopted in cases of suspended animation were instantly pursued. They were soon joined by three other gentlemen of the faculty, who rendered every possible assistance; every expedient was, in the course of the afternoon, resorted to—but alas in vain! and at five o'clock, in the opinion of all present, there remained not the faintest hope of restoring animation—the spark of life was totally extinguished.

Thus, in one sad moment, was lost to society and to the church of Christ, one of the loveliest of men —one of the most eloquent of ministers: upon whose lips, only the preceding day, hundreds had hung with delight, and the long continued and extended exertion of whose powers, in a larger sanctuary, the foundation of which he had but recently laid, thousands anticipated with eager desire! To tell how many hearts have bled, beneath this awful visitation, would require a fortitude which I do not possess—and constitute a volume, not surpassed, in the anguish which it would describe, by any similar catastrophe in the records of human wo. The tidings spread through the populous town of Liverpool, with a rapidity, such as, in cases of public calamity, is usually inspired. They circulated through all ranks, and excited one common feeling of regret in every bosom. They reached the exchange, and produced an extraordinary impression there; those who knew him, mourned the loss of one they loved—and those who knew him not, felt the agitation of that sudden shock, which the premature removal of such men occasions—they participated in the general sympathy—and deplored the loss of Spencer, as an event demanding general regret! Numbers hastened to the spot. Some incredulous, to obtain the sad assurance of the truth —and others to enjoy the mournful satisfaction of beholding that countenance in death, on which they had often gazed with transport, when kindled into radiance by the ardor of the soul that lately animated it. All was confusion and distress. Such a day has been seldom seen in Liverpool; a day of such dreadful gloom—such universal grief. From the countenance of every one, to whom the tidings came, one might have imagined he had lost a friend; whilst many, to whom by intimate acquaintance he had become peculiarly endeared—petrified at first with mingled horror and surprise, when recollection and feeling returned, yielded, for awhile, to the influence of the deepest sorrow.

The estimation in which Mr. Spencer was held in Liverpool was most decidedly marked after his decease. The public prints severally bore testimony to his worth, and pronounced a warm, but just eulogium on his extraordinary merits; the introduction of some extracts will not be unsuitable here.

"Mr. Spencer was about twenty years of age; in his person and countenance eminently prepossessing; and of manners most amiable, conciliating, and engaging. As a preacher, his talents were held in a degree of estimation, and possessed an extent of influence, which have seldom been equalled in the annals of pulpit eloquence. His discourses were rather persuasive and hortatory, than argumentative or disquisitive: they were addressed more to the imagination and affections, than to the judgment; and this apparently, not so much from any deficiency of talent, as from a firm persuasion, that, in matters of religion, the avenues to the understanding are chiefly to be sought in the heart. His sermons, thus constituted, were adorned with a felicity of expression, and delivered in an unremitted fluency of language, altogether surprising in extemporaneous discourses. These essential qualities of eloquence were assisted by an uncommonly distinct articulation, a tone of voice singularly melodious, and great gracefulness of action. Thus gifted by nature, and improved by cultivation, it is not surprising that he possessed the power of attaching an audience, in a manner that will never be forgotten by those who attended his ministry. Perhaps it scarcely ever before fell to the lot of any individual, at so early an age, to have diffused religious impression through so extensive a circle of hearers; and those who looked forward to the maturity of his powers, with the hope naturally inspired by his early excellence, will regard his loss as a public misfortune."

"The deceased was about twenty years of age, a youth of amiable and engaging manners; and his pulpit talents were so far above his years, as to obtain for him a large share of public admiration and popularity. His premature death has most deeply affected the feelings of his numerous friends, who looked forward to the maturity of his early powers with the highest hope of obtaining in him a most valuable accession to the dissenting ministry."

But at the solemnities of interment, the strongest demonstration of public feeling was afforded. The concourse of people assembled to witness or assist in the last sad token of respect to his remains was never, perhaps, equalled in Liverpool. Religion, Humanity, Friendship, and Genius, mingled their tears at his grave. The funeral took place on Tuesday, the 13th August, 1811: the procession moved from the Park about eleven in the morning, in the following order:—

The gentlemen of the Faculty;
Ministers, four abreast;
THE BODY,
The pall supported by ten ministers, five on each side:
The mourners;
Friends of the deceased,
To the number of one hundred and thirty,
With white hat-bands and gloves,
Six abreast.

All the streets through which the procession passed were crowded to excess, as also were the windows and balconies of the houses. But the greatest

decorum was observed; and a seriousness, according with the solemn occasion, was manifested by all. The corpse was borne into the chapel, late the scene of Mr. Spencer's labors, and the Rev. Mr. Charrier of Bethesda chapel, read part of the 15th chapter of 1st of Corinthians, and the 4th and 5th of the 1st of Thessalonians, and offered a most solemn prayer At the grave an eloquent and impressive oration was delivered by the Rev. Joseph Fletcher, A. M. of Blackburn. The mournful service was concluded by a prayer from the Rev. Mr. Lister, of Lime street chapel.

"The whole scene," a Liverpool journal observes, "was affecting—it could not be otherwise. Every idea which could be associated with the spectacle was such as to excite the deepest sympathy. The flower of youth, scarcely opened, snatched from the stem of life by a sudden and rude attack of mortality: a minister, who lately fixed the attention of crowded audiences by the power of his eloquence, conveyed to the house of silence and darkness; the fairest prospects of honor and usefulness in life blasted; the warm hopes of his friends wrecked in a moment; and the deep, the dreadful wound inflicted in the feelings of relatives, and the dearest connections. Such, however, are the appointments of a supreme governing Intelligence, to which human choice and wishes must bow with reverence, supported by the general principle of the justice, wisdom, and benevolence, which direct the affairs of men. Similar afflictions are of frequent occurrence in private life, though they there pass unnoticed. Public characters excite attention both in their zenith and fall; and so far as society is bereft of virtue, useful talents, and active zeal, their death is a public calamity."

On the following Sunday evening, a funeral sermon was preached at Newington chapel, by the Rev. William Roby, of Manchester, from Heb. xiii. 7, 8, "Remember them who have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God; whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation: Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." This sermon, so admirably adapted to sooth the disconsolate congregation to whom it was addressed, has been presented to them, by its respected author, from the press.

But not in Liverpool alone was the shock of Mr. Spencer's death felt—or the loss occasioned by his sudden removal deplored. Scarcely was there a district in Britain to which the melancholy tidings did not reach. The universal esteem in which the beloved youth was held, was manifested by the numerous sermons which were preached throughout the country, to embalm his memory, and to improve his death. In London several were delivered—many singularly eloquent and appropriate; several have issued from the press, and have been noticed in the preceding pages. The sympathy awakened for the mourning church, was as general as the regret occasioned by their pastor's death. Of Spencer it may be truly said, "*devout men carried him to his burial, and made great lamentation over him,*" whilst the situation of his bereaved people, excited in every bosom compassion and grief, "*for they were left as sheep without a shepherd.*"

It now remains that I present the reader with a general sketch of Mr. Spencer's character. The opportunity afforded in such works as these, of illustrating great and important principles, in their influence upon human conduct, ought to be seized with avidity, and improved with care. In this respect Biography is particularly valuable, and possesses a considerable advantage over general history. The subjects and characters of general history are numerous, complicated, and often but indistinctly seen—here the object is single. The mind dwells without diversion or distraction, on the character presented to its contemplation. Being relieved from the toil which variety occasions, it has leisure to dwell upon its several features, and to observe their mutual influence or associated harmony. The scenes and events of an individual's life, when faithfully and judiciously recorded, are admirably adapted to develope the formation of character—whilst lessons of wisdom, and principles of action are better understood and more correctly appreciated, when drawn out in the scenes of actual life, than they possibly can be, when simply, and abstractedly delivered. And, moreover, the peculiar sentiments which the delineation of certain characters is especially calculated to illustrate, are better remembered when associated with names, with places, and with deeds; whilst they make a far deeper impression upon the heart, from the circumstance that their nature and tendency are at once demonstrated, by the actual consequences to which, in these individual cases, they have led. In the pages of the biographer, the man lives again for us. "Being dead he yet speaketh." We are put in possession, in an hour or two, of knowledge, which it cost him years of anxious labor to acquire. We obtain confidence—we awake to an honorable ambition—we feel the animating influence of hope, whilst we mark the excellencies of his character, and the successful labors of his life. Self-examination is induced, by a contemplation of his failings—and caution, by a disclosure of his errors. Humility is promoted, by observing with how much imperfection the noblest and the loveliest qualities in man are unhappily combined—and the provision which the gospel makes for our final acceptance with God, derives importance and value from the assurance, which every faithful piece of biography must tend to establish—that the purest character—the fairest life, must sink before the high standard and demands of Jehovah's perfect law.

In calling the attention of my readers to views of Mr. Spencer's character, I am aware that the objection may be started—that in one so young, a character could hardly be formed at all. The objection is founded in reason. But although his character had not obtained its maturity—or assumed those fixed and established habits, with which years and experience would have invested it—still it had arrived at such a stage of its progress, as already to present strong lines, and obvious features. Some, so deeply marked as to be recognised by all who knew him—and others, upon the infancy of which, the eyes of his most intimate associates dwelt, with unspeakable delight. And, young as it was, the character of Spencer at the age of *twenty*, was such, as even an *aged* Christian might not blush to own. I have often gazed, with pleasure, on the animating picture which my fancy drew, when it has added years of experience and of culture, to what *was* the character of Spencer at his death, and imaged to itself what, after the lapse of time, that character might possibly have been; and when recalled from the delightful reverie, I have mourned that the lovely object existed only in my fancy. But we do wrong to mourn. His removal from our world was the dictate alike of Infinite Wisdom and Love. And the time appointed for his departure was the best. His character had attained that degree of maturity, for which God had destined it, on earth—he had performed the service which he was called to accomplish in the church. His sun rose with almost unexampled rapidity to its meridian—his work was completed with prodigious speed—yet, having reached his appointed elevation, and performed his allotted labor—*that* was the suitable period for his removal. He had witnessed as much impression and effect, in his short ministry, as many an aged

pastor would rejoice to observe, after years of incessant toil. Can his death be considered then as premature? If one laborer accomplishes his share of the day's exertion an hour or two earlier than his companions, may he not be permitted to retire to his rest before them? Spencer has finished his course—he rests from his labors—and his works do follow him.

As A MAN, he was GENEROUS—FRANK—INDEPENDENT—UNAFFECTED—UNSUSPECTING—and SINCERE.—*Generous;* his heart, his hand, and his purse, were ever at the service of the needy, and cheerfully devoted to the cause of Christ. An instance of his generosity has been recorded in the preceding narrative—that of his usually adding to the collection, when he preached for the benefit of a poor church that had an aged minister. One of the last acts of his life was an act of benevolence; he had no money about him, at the time of his death, for he had emptied his pockets to a poor person, previous to his leaving the house on the morning of that awful day. Had he lived to be the possessor of a house, and the head of a family, from *him* the apostolic injunction, "*given to hospitality*," would have met with a spontaneous acquiescence. Unhappily, this qualification of a Christian bishop, some of our worthy pastors have it not in their power to display! —*Frank;* he was open and ingenuous; his sentiments were ever undisguised; his language spoke correctly what he thought and felt; and his countenance was an index to his mind. Truly was it said of him, that he carried his heart in a crystal vase, so that all could see it. His opinions he never attempted to conceal; his attachments and his dislikes were, with equal freedom and sincerity, declared. The prudent will say, it displayed but little knowledge of mankind; true: he was ignorant, and therefore unsuspecting, and often unguarded. He did not calculate upon treachery under the garb of friendship—or censorious observation, in the social circle. Alas! that experience should only tend to make a man suspicious, and intercourse with society render him sceptical in his opinions of his fellow men!—*Independent;* perhaps too much so, for his station as a minister of the gospel, and especially as the pastor of a church. He had his partialities and predilections—every man must have them—he cannot be brought, by any discipline, to love that which is totally uncongenial to his taste and habits, however he may be inclined to cherish and testify a deference and respect. But these predilections, Spencer was ever ready to declare; and such was his independent spirit, that no consideration of interest could induce him to utter a compliment or pay an attention which was foreign from his purpose, or repugnant to his feelings. To *all*, he cheerfully paid the regard which the obligations of his station claimed; but only with such as his heart and feelings approved, did he share the social intercourse, or the endearments of friendship. And, surely, a man in public life, whilst he pays to all around him such attentions as the functions of his office involve, has a right to select the individuals with whom he will share the social hour, or to whom he may commit the more sacred and retired feelings of his heart. Yet, even here, prudence would suggest certain cautions, particularly adapted to the very delicate circumstances in which the pastor of a church is placed.—*Unaffected;* every thing like affectation and display, he abhorred—every thing feminine and soft in manners, he excessively disliked. His own were the reverse; they were characterized by impetuosity and boldness—a decision and a promptitude marked every thing he did. There was often a carelessness about his dress, arising from that indifference to show and decoration, which, in every thing, he displayed. So neglectful was he of his appearance, that he did not wear a watch, till urged repeatedly by the want of it, he at length purchased one. He observed to a friend a circumstance connected with the purchase of this watch, not perhaps unworthy of insertion. He asked the man of whom he bought the watch, if what he demanded was his lowest price? "Yes, Sir," said the man; I heard you preach upon seeing Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God, and I will not overcharge *you*." He loved to preach in a gown; it tended, he said, to conceal his youth, and give weight to his sermon—otherwise he was indifferent about it. How far this may be considered as sufficient reason for wearing a gown, I cannot determine; certainly, there are matters of higher moment than this; and it is surely cause of regret, that great and good men should ever grow warm, and say or do strong things, upon a subject, confessedly so inferior in importance.—*Unsuspecting;* he formed an estimate of every individual's bosom by the ingenuousness of his own; no wonder then, if sometimes he should have erred, and the error prove a source of poignant anguish and unavailing regret. He who has never seen a storm, may, all unconscious of his danger, trust the syren sea; but he who has endured the tempest will mark well the signs of the sky, ere he tempt the treacherous element that has once deceived.—*Sincere;* to have his hand, was to possess his heart; and where he could not give the latter, he never presented the former. Whatever he said he uttered from conviction; and on every assurance, the firmest reliance might be placed.

As A FRIEND, he was WARM—DISINTERESTED—and AFFECTIONATE. The *fervor* of his friendship is sufficiently displayed in the correspondence preserved in the preceding pages. His whole soul seems infused into his paper; and, if such were his letters, happy must they esteem themselves who were favored with his private walks and most retired intercourse. "His friendship, I can truly say," observes his most intimate companion, "has given me one of the most lively views that I ever enjoyed of union and communion with the spirits of *just* men made *perfect*. I shall not easily forget the impression of awe upon my mind while hearing him preach at White's Row, from these words:—'*Because there is wrath, beware lest he take thee away at a stroke, then a great ransom cannot deliver thee.*' I thought I surely can never more use the freedom of friendship with *him*. But at his descent from the pulpit, his sparkling eye, his friendly squeeze, and affectionate pressure of my arm to his side as we returned, convinced me that he was still the humble, interesting youth with whom I had taken sweet counsel, and walked to that house of God." Nor was he guided in the formation of his friendships by a principle of *interest*. This indeed governs the world in their associations:—

> "And what is friendship but a name,
> A charm that lulls to sleep,
> A shade that follows wealth or fame,
> But leaves the wretch to weep."

But he sought not high connections—exalted friendships—or splendid alliances—he shrunk from grandeur, pomp, and parade—he felt uneasy when surrounded by any thing like splendor—he preferred the calm mediocrity of life, as furnishing, for the most part, excellence in character, and comfort in intercourse!—Of his *affection*, it were in vain to speak—no language can describe all the tenderness of his affectionate heart—affection the purest and most refined. The following is the testimony of one who deeply participated in it:—

"And surely I may experimentally say, that a more affectionate spirit than that of Spencer never

animated a fallen son of Adam. When we first met he unbosomed himself, freely claimed my friendship, with an affection that overpowered me, and entreated the *fidelity* of friendship, charging me to watch him narrowly, and point out every imperfection. If ever the delightful scene recorded 1 Samuel xviii. 1, was reiterated, (and doubtless it often has been) it was when Spencer *had made an end of speaking*. But proofs of the affection of Spencer's heart are totally unnecessary. I shall mention one only. Soon after we became acquainted, he used to call generally on a Saturday evening —'Well, where shall you be to-morrow? with Mr. Foster, I suppose.' 'Why, I suppose so too, unless you draw me away.' 'I am sure I should be sorry to draw you away, if you do not see it right; I am sure you must be a loser by hearing me instead of Mr. Foster; yet if you could see right, I should be very glad.' When he preached in the country, he used, he said, to look round for a retired corner for me, such as I should like, if there. At Hoxton, he pointed out a seat for me, and when he rose from prayer, used to see if I filled it."

As a student, he was diligent—conscientious—and successful.—*Diligent;* to a habit of study he had been inured almost from his infancy—the elements of knowledge he obtained under peculiar difficulty—and had he not been inspired by an ardent love of that sacred work, for the honorable discharge of which, he deemed the acquisition of human learning necessary, his name would probably never have been known beyond the circles of his native town. But he longed for the acquisition of knowledge, not from a principle of self-gratification, or the love of fame, but as an auxiliary to his great design. Impelled by such a powerful principle, he sought for it with unceasing avidity—and labored in its pursuit with unconquerable ardor. But it was his lot to meet with a continued chain of obstacles to the free and ample gratification of his taste for learning. In his childhood, the circumstances of his family were inauspicious, and he was compelled, at a period when the powers of his mind were unfolding, to devote those hours to manual labor, which he would have gladly consecrated to books. The year he spent at Harwich was the only year of uninterrupted study he enjoyed; for very soon after his entrance into Hoxton academy he began to preach—and then, his popularity formed a most serious and insurmountable barrier—whilst, after his settlement in the ministry, the important duties of his new and extensive sphere of action forbade the indulgence of any pursuits in private, but such as bore immediately upon his *public* work.

These circumstances, however, taught him the value of retirement, and instructed him in the happy art of husbanding his time. This art he cultivated with conscientious care—and whoever contemplates the numerous papers he has left behind, and compares them with the public engagements he performed, must be sensibly impressed with a conviction of his diligence. He never entered the pulpit without previous preparation. Most of his sermons were written throughout, except the heads of application, in which he usually trusted to the ardor of his mind, enkindled by the subject which he had discussed, and guided by a holy influence. Not that he slavishly committed his compositions to his memory, and delivered them by rote. For, although his discourses were thus precomposed, and numbers of them remain, yet not one conveys a correct idea of what his preaching actually *was*. The reason is, that in the pulpit he followed, not so much the impression of his written language on the memory, as the holy and ardent bias of his soul, flowing in the channel which he had previously prepared. The sermon in the study was completely formed—correctly arranged—and well connected—but to the lifeless form, delineated on his paper, and impressed upon his memory, in the pulpit he imparted a living soul; a principle of ardent piety, which operated as a charm, the power of which few were able to resist.

Indeed, so uniform was his habit of preparation for the pulpit, that when called upon suddenly to address some young persons, he said to a friend, "I wish you would address the children for me this afternoon; I have not prepared any thing—I have not considered a subject for them, and I would not offer, even to a *child*, that which cost me nothing."

But although this was his usual custom, yet, when extraordinary circumstances conspired to render a departure from it necessary, he could, with the greatest propriety and ease, delight and interest an audience from the rich treasures of his exalted mind. One instance of his powers, in extemporary and unpremeditated address, is related of him in Liverpool. Some important affair of a public nature engaged the general attention of the religious world, on a Sabbath evening, when as usual he had to preach; and, anticipating a thin attendance, he had prepared a sermon adapted to the supposed state of his auditory—but, when he reached the chapel, and saw it filled with anxious crowds, waiting to receive from his lips the words of life—his ardent mind seemed instantly inspired—he immediately fixed upon a passage more adapted to the scene, and with his pencil sketched the outline of a discourse, which, perhaps, in the whole series of his ministry, he never excelled.

But Mr. Spencer's diligence did not expend itself on commentators and elaborate pulpit compositions —he endeavored to study Providence—to improve events—and, so far as he had opportunity, to read mankind. His sentiments on this subject may be in the recollection of the reader.* I believe he uniformly acted in accordance with them, and especially had an opportunity of doing this when he became the pastor of a church. The propriety—the importance—the utility of this kind of study, to a minister, is too obvious to need discussion. To its aid may be attributed, in a great measure, that adaptation to the ever varying scenes of the Christian life, which the sermons of Spencer usually possessed. He studied the characters of the people of God —he marked with care the variations of their experience—the alternation of their feelings—and the vicissitudes of their enjoyment. Indeed, his knowledge in this respect was most amazing, especially in one so young. He seemed to know, and sweetly to divulge, what every Christian felt and mourned —and he had a balm of consolation for every sorrow he awakened—every wound he probed—As a student he was

Conscientious. He was so, in maintaining a habit of study, after the restraints of the college were withdrawn. Too many imagine, that what is improperly called, finishing their studies; that is, concluding their academic course, is in fact the legitimate close of all mental labor. Upon the stores then acquired, they are to feed, through the long years of an extended ministry, the church of God with wisdom and knowledge. Alas! for the people over whom such a pastor presides. The stores of that mind must be but scanty at the best, and soon expended; what then but mental and spiritual famine must ensue. Ill does it bode for a congregation, when their minister is a lover of pleasure; a lover of society; a lover of mirth; more than a lover of study. People should remember this, and should act accordingly. They love to have things

* See page 229.

brought from the sacred treasury before them, *new* as well as *old;* but the *new* cannot be obtained without research, nor the *old* presented, in an attractive form, without thought. To all this, time, and that no scanty portion, must be devoted. And the hours of study must be taken either from the day, or from the night; if from the night, it impairs the health; if from the day, it must abridge them of their minister's society. A congregation, then, cannot with justice expect to see their pastor always in their social circles, and yet demand from him on the Sabbath, what much and intense application only can enable him to produce. A minister worthy of his people's affection cannot be too much esteemed, nor his society too highly valued; but even this authorized attachment may be carried to an injurious length; a people may desire too much; God may gratify their wish; he may send them a *busy body* in the form, and with the pretensions of a minister; and it may be said of them, "*he gave them their request, but sent leanness into their soul.*" For an unoccupied study, must cause, eventually, an empty mind.

Mr. Spencer was conscientious in the *direction which he gave to his studies.* Aware that he had but little time for preparatory labor, and a mighty work before him, we have already seen, that at Hoxton, whilst he performed with cheerfulness and credit the duties of his class, in the various departments of literature and science, yet he consecrated the first and most constant exercises of his mind to such studies as were immediately connected with preaching, and the pastoral office.* And when actually embarked in his most arduous profession, the little time he could procure for study he found too precious for the pursuit of any object whose claims, in connection with the ministry, might hold but a secondary rank. Hence he pursued not so much the study of general literature, as that of THEOLOGY. Aware that the sources of this sacred science, are the holy Scriptures, and that to understand them correctly, requires an accurate knowledge of their original languages, he cultivated with great care, the study of the Hebrew and the Greek. To the former of these tongues he was peculiarly attached —his early labors in it have been already stated,† and I believe that his proficiency bore a just proportion to his exertions. On Theology he read very extensively, and for the most part the productions of the puritan divines. His library was small—it was but in its infancy; but it was well chosen. His study, which remained precisely in the state in which he left it on the morning of his death, was an object of considerable curiosity to the inhabitants and visitors of Liverpool: many judicious and venerable ministers came to see it, and all expressed their admiration of the taste which he displayed in the selection of his books. There was scarcely a volume that did not bear most obviously on the work of the ministry. The cast of a man's mind may be gathered from an inspection of his library, if the volumes composing it have been of his own selection. Whoever should form an estimate of Spencer's character from his books, must pronounce him a sound and well informed divine.

As a student he was *successful.* If a man may be deemed successful who accomplishes what he proposes to himself, he certainly was so. He never desired to be a profound mathematician—an acute philosopher—or an accomplished classic—but a useful preacher—a good divine. As a preacher, few could compare with him—as a divine, he surpassed most of his contemporaries, of the same age and standing. But his attainments in classical literature were far from being scanty; that he had read the best Greek and Roman authors, with considerable advantage, was obvious from the purity and elegance of his style. And in the perusal of those English writers, most justly celebrated for the correctness of their reasoning, and the chasteness of their composition—he was well trained, whilst under the tuition of his excellent and revered friend at Harwich. Upon most subjects he was well informed, and could converse with ease. He disliked controversy, at any rate in public, however he might be disposed to try his strength in private. His chief excellence did not lie in the power of conducting a deep, an intricate, and long continued process of reasoning to a triumphant close. He rather excelled in clearly unfolding the more prominent features of the gospel—in stating with correctness the great truths of Christianity, and supporting them by arguments purely *scriptural*—for such discussions he was amply furnished. His knowledge of the Bible was most extensive, and his quotations from it were, in general, remarkably apt and striking. But it was in prayer, chiefly, that his familiarity with the Bible was observed. Not a sentiment escaped him, for which he had not suitable language borrowed from the Scriptures: and this rendered his prayers peculiarly rich, simple, and appropriate.

Of elegant accomplishments he possessed but little. I believe he never touched the pencil. He was fond of music, but he used no instrument, and though perpetually humming tunes to favorite hymns, he was not a good singer. He was much devoted to the love of poetry, especially that of Milton, Young, Cowper, and Kirke White. He was exceedingly attached to Kelly's hymns, and frequently repeated from them, with great fervor and delight. When a boy he courted the muse himself, but not with much success. Though not disciplined in the schools of fashionable life, his manners were easy, and his action graceful; and these, added to a lovely countenance, and an elegant form, rendered him interesting, both in his public engagements and in his private intercourse.

AS A CHRISTIAN, he was FERVENT—HOLY—and HUMBLE—*Fervent;* his piety was the ardor of an unquenchable flame. With him religion was no matter of mere profession and convenience; nor did it lose its impression by the frequent recurrence of its subjects and its duties—he seemed to live under its abiding influence—it was wrought into the constitution of his nature—its principles were the springs —its precepts the rule—its objects the end of all his actions. To this he ever had respect—what opposed it he heartily abhorred—what clashed with it he cheerfully resigned—what injured it he conscientiously avoided. His love to God was ardent. In this I think he much resembled Mr. Pearce, of Birmingham; and, indeed, often, when contemplating the life of Spencer, my thoughts have involuntarily recurred to certain traits of character preserved in the memoirs of that glorified saint.* His love to God shed a glorious lustre on his whole character and conduct; every thing that came within the sphere of his influence or operation was irradiated by it. But chiefly would I confine myself now to the influence of this noble principle upon himself. It inspired him with a love of piety: as a Christian he was eminent for

Holiness. He contemplated the character of God, and was attracted to it by its purity. "I shall not," says his friend, "easily forget the delight which sparkled in his eye when conversing upon the divine

* See page 215.
† See page 198.

* See Memoirs of the Rev. Samuel Pearce, A. M. with extracts from some of his most interesting letters by Andrew Fuller.

attribute; holiness. 'How sweet,' said he, 'is that word *holy!*—*holy* Father—*holy* Saviour—*holy* Spirit—*holy* Scriptures. Surely if there is one word dearer to me than another, it is the word *holy*.'" During his residence at Hoxton, the same friend observed to a student in the institution, whose attention he wished to direct to the character of Spencer, "Perhaps you perceive youthful levity in him?" "No," he replied, "I have remarked him particularly, but it was for his *spirituality*."

His ardent love of holiness enkindled and cherished in his bosom a corresponding hatred to sin; and so strong was this principle of love to God, that the dread of offending his purity sometimes amounted almost to terror, and enveloped his mind in most distressing gloom. A paper composed at one of these melancholy seasons of depression has been recently discovered; it is entitled,

"MISERABLE ILLS UNDER WHICH I DAILY GROAN."

BODILY.

An incessant bilious complaint.
General languor, nervous feeling, and head-ache.
The fatigues of my great and repeated exertions in preaching.

MENTAL.

The illness of——
The awful weight of responsibility attaching to the ministerial work.
The extreme distance between myself and my old, choice, and invaluable friends.
The impossibility I discover of visiting all the people I wish.
The little time I can appropriate to study.
The dreadful state of coldness and formality in religion, which I know the eternal God sees in me, and which, I fear, he hates me for.
The dread I often feel, lest, after all, I should dwell for ever in HELL FIRE!
Oh! God, who is sufficient for these things? Oh! cast me not away from thy presence; take not thy Holy Spirit from me. Oh! God be merciful to me a guilty and a wretched sinner. *Be it so*—for Christ's sake. Amen.
Monday evening, May 27, 1811.

But this was not the usual tone of his mind. Few there are so highly favored but that, sometimes, they are called to walk in darkness. The same apostle who declares at one period, *I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep what I have committed unto him until that day*; at another, cries, *O wretched man that I am, &c.* and again, *Lest, after having preached unto others, I myself should be a cast away*. This document is a commentary on a passage in one of Spencer's letters: "Be assured that I as well as yourself have walked in darkness, and complained that there was no light. Fluctuations in experience are, I am sure, my lot, &c." He was

Humble. For abundant evidence of the truth of this assertion, I need only appeal to his correspondence, his conversation, and his conduct; they each demonstrate that he walked *humbly with his God*. Indeed so prominent a feature in his character was humility, that his ministry derived from this prolific source a considerable portion of its excellence. "For," as a friend observed, "his deep humility and self-debasement leading him wholly to distrust himself, his affections ascended continually to the Saviour, and brought down that abundant supply of spirituality which animated both his sermons and his life."

A minister one day unguardedly said to him, "Mr. Spencer, I have been reading of your fame." "My fame, sir." "Yes; I have been reading in one of the public prints, that the Rev. Thomas Spencer has been preaching several eloquent and impressive sermons at Brighton; and if you will call at my house I will show you the newspaper." Spencer declined going; and his remarks afterwards were worthy of himself.

"I am strongly pressed to visit Mr. ——," said he; "I cannot; his circumstances are so much above mine, that it would be dangerous for me. If I get a habit of visiting the rich, I shall neglect the poor, and my expectation of usefulness lies among *them*."

His humility led him early to solicit, and highly to value the *fidelity* of friendship. As he had a deep and intimate acquaintance with his own heart, he knew and deplored its corruptions; and turned with contempt from those professed and dangerous friendships, which only tend to feed the flame he was anxious to stifle and subdue. No friend of his was ever more faithful to him than Mr. B——; and few persons were more highly esteemed by him. Speaking of that gentleman, he said, "I owe him particular respect, and I wish to show it."

There was one instance in which his late attendance at a place of worship, where he was to preach, was unhandsomely attributed to pride. "He takes liberties," said they, "because he is popular." Let not his memory suffer by such an imputation. It is in my power to roll away from the character of our departed friend this cloud. It was his attention to the duties of the closet, and not his pride, which caused his late attendance that day. It has been already observed, that he always went from his closet to the pulpit. On that day he allowed himself the proper time for retirement, intending to take a coach from the city, where he dined, to Walworth, where he was to preach. But a sudden fall of snow engaged every conveyance, and he was obliged to walk; the distance was considerable, and the consequence was, he was too late. When an error in the conduct of a minister is committed, reasons are easily assigned, and unhappily those the most uncharitable come the readiest to hand; and few have sufficient generosity or justice to inquire whether that which they have chosen is correct or not.*

The following extract of a letter, dated July 3, 1810, shall close this part of our review of Spencer's character. It was addressed to one who feared that his popularity might have an unhappy influence upon his mind:

"A thousand thanks for the solicitude you express for my safety in the midst of the snares and dangers which appear to you to surround me; never may I be so left as to lose the dignity of the CHRISTIAN, much more of the MINISTERIAL character, by being pleased with so empty a nothing as popular applause; I cannot but recollect that this is a distinction not unfrequently bestowed upon the most unworthy of men, and it is so little calculated to afford any thing like happiness or peace of mind, that I hope I shall always be taught to esteem it a mere puff of noisy breath; that so being elevated above it, I may seek that reward alone, which a sense of THE SMILE OF GOD will ever bestow. Oh! my friend, may those pleasures be mine which arise from the testimony of my conscience, that I am seeking to please that Divine Being, 'whose frown can disappoint the proudest hopes, whose approbation prosper ever mine.'"

* It may be said that this incident is too trifling to be recorded. I do not think so. Nothing is unimportant which illustrates character; and it is in these *little* things, for the most part, that the character may be ascertained. Besides, the memory of the dead is sacred; and I should not discharge the duties which I have taken upon myself in the compilation of this volume, to the satisfaction of my own mind, were I to suffer any spot or cloud to remain upon the lovely character of Spencer which I am able to remove.

As a minister, we shall contemplate Mr. Spencer as a preacher of the gospel, and pastor of a church. Though for the most part these two offices are combined, yet those who understand their nature, and the duties they involve, must be conscious of the distinction which this division implies. Many a man is an admirable *preacher*, who is but ill qualified for the retired and constant duties of the pastoral office: and many a man is exemplary as a *pastor* who has little except his piety, which indeed is much, to recommend him as a *preacher*. As Spencer united in his own person the two offices, so did he eminently possess the qualifications of both.

As a Preacher his discourses were *purely evangelical*: this was the cast of all his sermons. He never preached to display himself,—but always to exalt the Saviour: this was his constant aim, and to accomplish it, he dwelt much upon the beauties of his character—the charms of his person, the fullness of his atonement, the perfection of his righteousness. He perpetually dwelt upon his willingness and ability to save; and in order to demonstrate the necessity and the value of his great salvation, he seldom failed to restore to the fallen, polluted, guilty, helpless state of man. He consulted not the inclinations, the passions or the prejudices of his hearers, but preached simply, faithfully, and affectionately, the most humiliating, as well as the most animating doctrines of the gospel. Whatever text he struck, living waters seemed immediately to flow. Whatever was the subject, or the occasion—his holy and ardent mind, ever panting for the salvation of immortal souls, connected with it truths and considerations the most solemn and important. His applications were forcible and impressive. There he wrestled with the people, with a fervor, resembling that with which, in prayer, he wrestled with his God. He seemed to exhaust every argument which might be brought to bear upon his great object, and to these he often added appeals and entreaties, the most tender and affecting. *Then* he seemed to lose sight of every consideration, but his own responsibility, and his people's good—and as though the congregation before him were the only people remaining to be saved, and as though every time of preaching was the only opportunity afforded him of using the means of their salvation, he besought them, as an ambassador for Christ, to be reconciled to God.

The general cast of his preaching may be gathered from his texts, which are freely scattered up and down in the preceding pages. By his confession of faith it will be seen, that his sentiments were most decidedly what have obtained, in the Christian world, the epithet, *Calvinistic*—exactly in conformity with the Shorter Catechism of the Assembly of Divines. To these doctrines he was most warmly attached, and as they were the subjects of his firm belief, so were they the constant topics of his discourse, both in public and in private. Valuing these doctrines so highly, and cherishing so deep a sense of their importance, we cannot be surprised that he should feel an express regret, when he saw them, in the sermons of ministers, neglected and cast into the shade. Perhaps, in his mode of expression on such occasions, he was sometimes incautious.* Admitting that it was so, we cannot but admire the principle. Where doctrines assume, in the view of the individual, an importance, similar to that which we are accustomed to attach to those grand principles which formed the basis of Mr. Spencer's ministry, we cannot be surprised if he expresses warmly his regret, when he beholds them undervalued or abandoned.

His discourses were *judicious*—he particularly excelled in the adaptation of his subjects, and the selection of his texts, to particular circumstances and occasions. His sermons were never flippant, nor bombastic—but always solid and simple—full of sound divinity, conveyed in language, which, by its copiousness—its elegance,—its fluency,—astonished every auditor. His skill in meeting the several cases of his hearers, has been already noticed. Every age and every rank received their portion from his public instructions: the aged were astonished at his deep experience; the young were charmed with his affectionate manner; and few, very few, were the instances in which the hearers did not depart, each affirming, that there was something in the sermon that exactly suited them.*

As a preacher, Mr. Spencer was remarkable for *Animation;* indeed, this was so strongly characteristic of him, that almost every other feature might have been resolved into this. Mr. Styles, than whom no man is better able to form and express an opinion of his worth, most correctly observes, "If I were to sum up Mr. Spencer's character in one word, comprehending in it only what is excellent and ennobling to human nature, I should say it was animation. His intellect was feeling, and his feeling was intellect. His thoughts breathed, and his words glowed. He said nothing tamely, he did nothing with half a heart." With him the animation of the pulpit was enkindled by the devotion of the closet. His communion with God was deep and habitual, and this rendered him most feelingly alive to the great truths which he delivered—whilst the ardent desire which he cherished for the salvation of sinners supplied, with constant fuel, the flame of his zeal. In the pulpit, he appeared to be abstracted

* Christians, and especially Christian ministers, should be sparing in the use of those broad and unqualified assertions respecting their brethren in the ministry, which are so easily *made*, yet so difficult to *prove*, and so injurious in their influence. It is easy to say, *he does not preach the gospel*, of a minister—who loves it, and propagates it with as much ardor as the censurer himself. He may not preach the gospel with the same phrases—in precisely the same style of language. Perhaps the censurer loves to dwell entirely on the *promises* of the gospel—on the *sovereignty* and *freedom* of Divine grace—on salvation as the *unmerited* gift of God by *faith* and not by works:—all this, the man he censures believes and preaches too; but then with the *promises* of the gospel, he blends the *threatenings*—and with the assurance that salvation is of *grace* and by *faith*—the importance of *obedience*, and a *holy life* as the evidence of saving faith.

* A passage in a sermon recently published by the Rev. Robert Hall, admirably describes this quality of Mr. Spencer's preaching. "Without descending to such a minute specification of circumstances, as shall make our addresses personal, they ought unquestionably to be characteristic; that the conscience of the audience may feel the hand of the preacher searching it, and every individual know where to class himself. The preacher who aims at doing good will endeavor, above all things, to insulate his hearers, to place each of them apart, and render it impossible for him to escape by losing himself in a crowd. At the day of judgment, the attention excited by the surrounding scene, the strange aspect of nature, the dissolution of the elements, and the last trump, will have no other effect than to cause the reflections of the sinner to return with a more overwhelming tide on his own character, his sentence, his unchanging destiny; and amid the innumerable millions who surround him he will *mourn apart*. It is thus the Christian ministers should endeavor to prepare the tribunal of conscience, and turn the eyes of every one of his hearers on himself."—*Discourse delivered to the Rev. James Robertson at his ordination, by Robert Hall, A. M.*

from every consideration, but those immediately connected with his subject, and his office. It was this holy fervor, perhaps, which constituted the great charm of his ministry. The simplest observations from his lips were invested, by his manner of expressing them, with an importance which demanded attention. The interest which he felt himself in the momentous topics he discussed, he communicated to his hearers; and it was impossible not in some degree to feel, when every one saw how eagerly intent he was upon promoting their eternal welfare.

"I remember," says a friend, "that one evening when we reached Hoxton, in good time for *him* but too late for *me*, as *he* was to preach, the chapel was thronged, and I stood in the passage through which he passed to the pulpit. His delicate frame was too weak to sustain the animation of his mighty spirit. His half-closed mouth, fixed eye, flushed cheek, and panting breast, pained me to the heart as he passed me, and loudly spoke my awful responsibility, possessed of such a friend and such a ministry. He afterwards told me that he generally was agitated in his way to the pulpit, but that when he reached it he seemed to feel himself at home. I once asked a medical friend, who heard him at Hoxton with me, 'how he heard?' '*Very* uncomfortably.' 'Why?' 'Because I saw that his preaching is at a physical expense to himself, beyond what you have any idea of. Every part of the service, except his repetition of the Lord's prayer, was at an expense which his frame is incapable of supporting.'"

As a preacher, he was

Solemn. He never degraded the awful dignity of his station, and his office, by *buffoonery* and *jests*,—he was popular—but he never courted popularity, by the practice of any thing that was *time-serving*, *crafty* or *mean*. As an eminent judge once observed, "he did not despise popularity, but he loved—not the popularity which he must follow—but the popularity that followed him." Who, but must behold with mingled sorrow and contempt, the low and disgusting arts, to which some men, who style themselves preachers of the gospel, will condescend, in order to gain the temporary admiration of the vulgar. There are some indeed, whose minds are unhappily so constituted, that they find it *impossible* to forego their humor, even in the pulpit. In such characters, while we deplore the failing, we esteem the men, and revere their excellencies. But where there is no talent to command respect—no superior worth to induce the exercise of forbearance and love, but mere tricks are resorted to for the sake of obtaining a name, every feeling is absorbed in that of mingled pity and disgust.

Mr. Spencer's preaching had a *holy tendency*. He loved the gospel, and gave to its leading truths the prominency in his discourses, but on them, as on a firm foundation, he built a superstructure of the purest morality. Whilst he directed his hearers to a higher source for acceptance with God, than obedience to the commands of the law, he never failed to enforce its precepts upon the practice of Christians, as the rule of their life. Upon the absolute necessity of holiness, both of heart and conduct, he constantly dwelt, and from every topic which he discussed, he deduced those practical lessons, which it naturally supplied.

But, although as a preacher he obtained almost unexampled popularity, he was yet remarkably

Modest and *unassuming*. No man would better take a hint, or receive reproof with greater humility and even thankfulness, but no man was more reluctant to give either, though he might have presumed much upon the importance which attended his station, and have dealt out his censures with a liberal hand.

"Do you think," observed a friend to him, "the expression, 'our realm,' which you use in prayer, quite right?" "Is it not?" "It may be so—but I never knew any individual except George III. and Thomas Spencer, use it, the one in his proclamations—the other in his prayers." Constantly as he used the phrase before—it never was known to escape him afterwards.

"Mr. S." said a gentleman, belonging to a certain congregation, to whom he was about to preach, "the people come in very late, in general. I wish you would reprove them for it this morning." "Oh, no, Sir," he replied, "it would ill become a visitor and a youth like me; it ought to be a stated or an aged minister."

He shrunk from the public notice to which he was exposed, and usually walked the street in great haste, and with downcast eyes, anxious to escape the gaze of men.

In the pulpit, Mr. Spencer was an interesting figure. His countenance had the fine bloom of youth. His voice was full tone and musical. His action was graceful and appropriate. He sometimes leaned over the pulpit, as if conversing with the people, with the greatest earnestness, and anxious to be so plain and explicit as that none should misunderstand. At others he stood with manly dignity, displaying with spontaneous ease, all the characteristics of genuine eloquence.

That as a preacher he was faultless, no one will be disposed to assert; but his faults were those of youth, which time and experience would have certainly corrected. He was sometimes too rapid—his zeal, like an impetuous torrent, bore him along, and would brook no check—by which his voice was often strained, and the usual placidity and dignity of his style somewhat interrupted. I conclude this sketch of his character as a preacher, by a note inserted at the close of Mr. Hall's discourse, above referred to:

"The sensation excited by the sudden removal of that extraordinary young man, (Mr. Spencer,) accompanied with such affecting circumstances, has not subsided, nor abated, as we are informed, much of its force. The event which has drawn so great a degree of attention, has been well improved in several excellent discourses on the occasion. The unequalled admiration he excited while living, and the deep and universal concern expressed at his death, demonstrate him to have been no ordinary character; but one of those rare specimens of human nature, which the great Author of it produces at distant intervals, and exhibits for a moment, while He is hastening to *make them up amongst his jewels*. The high hopes entertained of this admirable youth, and the shock approaching to consternation, occasioned by his death, will probably remind the classical reader of the inimitable lines of Virgil on Marcellus:—

> O nate, ingentem luctum ne quoere tuorum.
> Ostendent terris hunc tantum fata, neque ultra
> Esse sinent.

"The writer of this, deeply regrets his never having had an opportunity of witnessing his extraordinary powers; but from all he has heard from the best judges, he can entertain no doubt, that his talents in the pulpit were unrivalled, and that, had his life been spared, he would, in all probability, have carried the art of preaching, if it may so be styled, to a greater perfection than it ever attained, at least, in this kingdom. His eloquence appears to have been of the purest stamp, effective, not ostentatious, consisting less in the striking preponderance of any one quality, requisite to form a public speaker, than in an exquisite combination of them all; whence resulted an extraordinary power of

impression, which was greatly aided by a natural and majestic elocution. To these eminent endowments, he added, from the unanimous testimony of those who knew him best, a humility and modesty, which, while they concealed a great part of his excellencies from himself, rendered them the more engaging and attractive. When we reflect on these circumstances, we need the less wonder at the passionate concern excited by his death. For it may truly be said of him, as of St. Stephen, *that devout men made great lamentation over him.* May the impression produced by the event never be effaced; and, above all, may it have the effect of engaging such as are embarked in the Christian ministry, to *work while it is called to-day.*"

In directing my readers to a contemplation of Mr. Spencer's character as

A Pastor, I am influenced more, by a desire to render this general view of our departed friend complete, and to do ample justice to his memory, than by the prospect of any very considerable practical result. There are so many examples of pastoral diligence, furnished by the recorded lives of men venerable for their age, and valuable for their experience, that I cannot anticipate much from the pattern of a youth, just entered on his labors. But such as he was I am bound to represent him.

In his visits to the sick he was constant and tender.

His enlargement in prayer, at the bed-side of the diseased and dying, was truly astonishing. The depth of his experience and ability in speaking to the cases of the afflicted, appeared mysterious. But it was soon explained by a holy Providence. For whilst his friends saw him young and healthy, just entering into the world, He who seeth not as man seeth, beheld in him the Christian of fifteen years standing, just taking wing for glory. This consideration may tend to check invidious comparisons—for it is certainly unjust to compare one in whom God has cut short his work in righteousness, with those who, though older in years, are younger in grace, and have perhaps a long and honorable course before them.

His intercourse with his people was cheerful, spiritual and instructive.

He was no gossip. It was wished by some, that he had been more frequent in his visits. But it is difficult so to equalize the attention, in a large body of people, as to satisfy the demands of all, and by apparent neglect give offence to none. Where he did visit, he always left a happy impression of his piety, his wisdom, and his amiable disposition. He abhorred the idle tales of the day—he was no friend to scandal. He endeavored always to direct the conversation into a useful and pleasing channel. He was cheerful without levity, and serious without affectation. There was nothing formal or studied in his manners. In him, every thing was natural, and through all the departments of his character, there was a harmony of feature—a unity of principle, which every one observed and admired.

In all the duties of the pastoral office, he was well informed, affectionate, and constant.

He knew what belonged to his office—and never failed to practice what he knew. He made full proof of his ministry. He was a scribe well instructed in the mysteries of the kingdom. A workman that needed not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth—giving a portion to each, in due season—sparing the irregularities or prejudices of none—but seeking with ardent affection the good of all—he commended himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God. Early he girded on the armor—and soon became a leader in the armies of the Prince of Peace. He has fought a good fight, he has finished his course—and now he enjoys the crown.

REFLECTIONS.

I am unwilling further to detain the attention of the reader to a volume, which, but for its interesting subject, would have wearied his patience long ago, and which has imperceptibly swollen to a bulk, far greater than that which the writer, originally, intended it to obtain, by any additional reflections, especially as the preceding pages abound with observations of a practical nature, as the narrative suggested them—and as almost every topic of improvement which might now be introduced has been fully anticipated and forcibly expressed by the interesting publications which appeared upon the death of Spencer. And yet, were I to dismiss the volume, without any effort at a final improvement of the subject, I might be charged with neglecting the great object of biography—*utility;* and the book might be considered as deficient in the most important point.

In Spencer we see—

First, *That obscurity of birth or station presents no insurmountable barrier to the progress of real excellence.*

The history of past and present times furnishes unnumbered illustrations of this remark. Many who have lived to enlighten and to bless the world—who have obtained rank and fortune, and renown, were born in obscurity, and passed their earliest years in the oblivion of humble life. Let such as feel at present the pressure of circumstances, yet pant for scenes of honorable exertion, and extensive usefulness, ponder the life of Spencer and be encouraged. If God designs to use them for the public good, he will, by an unexpected train of events, in his providence call them forth; if not let them neither rush unbidden from their sphere, nor occupy their station in sullen discontent; if a wider field be not allowed them, let them cultivate with cheerfulness the little spot to which they are confined. The most retired hamlet affords abundant opportunities of doing good; and many a man to whom it is denied to enlighten crowded cities and populous towns, may be a star of the first magnitude in the village where he dwells.

Secondly, *We see in Spencer the commanding influence of genuine and fervent piety.*

This was the secret spring of all his energy—the fuel of his animation—the source of his popularity. That his mind was well furnished with solid truths—that his manner was engaging—that his form was graceful—that his countenance was lovely—that his language was elegant—that his voice was fine—is admitted; but it was his ardent piety which gave to each of these a charm, and awoke in the breasts of his auditors a feeling of reverence and solemnity, which the simple exhibition of them could never have produced. The graces of genuine eloquence, and the stores of a cultivated mind, are precious; but without piety, they are as "*sounding brass and tinkling cymbals:*" they may delight the ear, but never will impress the heart; and it is not, usually, the labors of the most polished and enlightened of his ministers, that Jehovah deigns especially to bless; but rather the unwearied exertions of those, whom the love of Christ and of immortal souls has rendered zealous in the sacred cause.

Thirdly, *We see in the labors of Spencer, an admirable example of diligence, and in the success that crowned them, a strong encouragement to exertion.*

So short was the period of his stated ministry, that we can only measure it by months: it had not reached to years. But few, perhaps, whose term of labor was so short as his, were ever honored with

more success; whilst many who have seen the number of his months often repeated in years of anxious labor, have not been favored with so much. If *all* prove faithful unto death, whom he enlisted whilst on earth, beneath the banners of the cross, he will head a goodly company, when the hosts of the redeemed shall be assembled at the judgment day. Who that knew and loved him, but must anticipate the joy with which he then shall say, "*here am I, Father, and the children whom thou hast given me.*"

Let the example of his exertions and success stimulate, quicken, and encourage ours. We work for the same Master, and are engaged in the same cause. And, to the student or the youthful preacher who may honor these pages with his regard, I will add, your term may be as short—if it be not as *successful*, let it be as *diligent*. The diligence is ours—the success is God's. He will not demand at our hands what is not ours to secure. He will give His rewards of grace to the faithful servant, whether his success be proportioned to his exertions or not; and we are "*a sweet savor unto Him in them that are saved, and in them that perish.*"

Fourthly, *from the early and sudden removal of Spencer, let churches learn to prize the labors of holy and devoted men, while they enjoy them.* Alas! too many only learn the value of their privileges by their removal. They neglected or lightly esteemed, whilst living, the minister, upon whose memory they heap eulogies and honors when departed; and I believe, that some have even bedewed the ashes of their pastors with affected tears, who accelerated and embittered their passage to the grave, by unkindness and neglect! Not so the people whom the death of Spencer suddenly bereaved. The tears with which they embalmed his memory, were suitable to the respect they bore his person—the love they cherished for his friendship—and the sense they entertain of his transcendent worth.* O that every minister living, were as much beloved! dying, were as unaffectedly deplored!

Fifthly, *in Spencer we see the excellence of real religion*—how it sweetens labor—soothes in affliction—supports in trial—and animates the soul in scenes of disappointment, and hours of care. To few are allotted severer labors—to few, so young, are measured heavier trials than those which he endured. But few, upon the whole, have possessed a greater share of happiness: there were intervals of sorrow, and clouds would sometimes obscure the brightness of his sun; but for the most part his hope was lively, and his prospects fair. He enjoyed religion upon earth—he anticipated the consummation of its bliss in heaven: and now he has entered into the joy of his Lord. His life was piety, and his end was peace.

Sixthly, *in the sudden removal of Spencer we mark the mysterious conduct of Jehovah's providence.*

At first sight the event might stagger the strongest faith, for he was snatched away at a period when his life seemed of the utmost moment to the people over whom he presided, and the circle in which he moved. Scarcely had his talents reached their maturity; his character was even then unfolding; from the promise of his youth, his friends dwelt with rapture on the anticipations of his manhood, and every day added some strokes of reality to the picture they drew—when suddenly, in the bloom of his youth—at the commencement of his course—just entered on his labors—he is arrested by the arm of death, and conducted to the silent grave. Was his death *untimely?* No—he had seen a good old age in usefulness, though not in years: "that life is long that answers life's great end." His end was fully answered, and he was gathered to the grave in peace. Was his death *severe?* No—to *him* it was tranquil, and serene; he crossed the river of Jordan, singing as he went, and in an unexpected moment, found himself safely landed on the shores of immortality. No raging billows awoke his fears—no agonies disturbed his countenance—death respected his loveliness, and preserved the beauty of the form, when the spirit that animated it was gone. But whilst for *him* his death was peaceful, was there ought of *mercy* in it to his *friends?* Yes—if they review and act upon the lessons it conveys, there is; to survivers it declares, that excellence and beauty must fade and die—let them seek an interest in HIM, in whom whosoever liveth and believeth shall not die eternally—to the *church* it will endear the assurance of His care, who is independent of instruments and the conqueror of death. To the young, it is a solemn admonition of the uncertainty of life—the instability of all terrestrial good. To such as attended his ministry—what a powerful application is it of the many sermons they have heard him preach, with such delight—but to so little profit! How must the event of the succeeding morning rivet the impression of those solemn words which, on the last Sabbath evening of his life, he addressed to them: "I shall soon meet you at the bar of God; I shall be there!" *O that they were wise, that they knew these things—that they would consider their latter end.*

END OF THE MEMOIRS.

APPENDIX.

No. I.

THE dissenters of various denominations have numerous academies, partly endowed by munificent individuals, and partly supported by voluntary subscription, for the education of young men for the work of the ministry. There are institutions of this kind at Homerton, Hoxton, Hackney, Wymondley, Rotherham Axminster, Idle, Wrexham, Bristol, Stepney, Caermarthen, York, Glasgow, and other places. In these schools of religion and literature, the course of study is for the most part liberal, and some of them have supplied the churches of Christ, for many generations, with sound and learned divines. The compiler had the honor to receive his education in the Old College, Homerton, a truly venerable institution, over which the Rev. Dr. John Pye Smith, and the Rev. Thomas Hill, preside. The following is an outline of the principles upon which that institution is founded, and the course of study which is there pursued.

It is held as a fudamental principle among the orthodox Dissenters, that no young man should be destined for the ministry as a mere profession; or educated with a view to that office, till he gives ra-

* By some liberal expositors of God's providence, the death of Spencer has been pronounced a judgment on the people, for what they have termed, "their *idolatrous attachment*" to him. Alas! the *idolizing* of its ministers is, surely, not the crying sin of the church at the present day! But was there any thing in the conduct of the people over whom Spencer presided, so contrary to the mind of God as to excite thus strongly his displeasure, in loving a man who was beloved wherever he was known—and revering an office which Christ himself has invested with so much dignity? Let such bold infringers of the prerogative of God, who presume to assign reasons for his conduct, when he has not deigned to give any, read—"*Know them that labor amongst you, and over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake, and be at peace among yourselves.*" Let them take the solemn admonition this passage gives; and perhaps their own ministers will have no occasion to regret that they have done so.

tional indications of that internal and sound piety, which arises from the operations of the Holy Spirit of God upon the heart. Their first care therefore is, to select such characters only as candidates for the office of the ministry; and in so doing, it happens not unfrequently, that the individuals whom ministers and private Christians select out of their congregations, have been engaged more or less in the avocations of secular life, and have enjoyed only a common education. It appears upon the average of many years, that about *two-thirds* of the ministers, educated in the Old College, at Homerton, have been of this description. The remaining third has consisted of young men, whose whole previous life had been devoted to literary pursuits, and whose superior advantages of education, had been adorned by early and promising piety. But in all cases, the prerequisites for admission into this ancient institution are, *creditable and ample testimonies* that the applicant is, in the severest judgment of Christian reason, a sincere, devoted, and practical disciple of Christ, born of God, and sanctified by the Holy Spirit. In addition to this grand requisite, the directors of the academy require some evidence of respectable talents, and such as are likely to improve the advantages to be conferred. As a further security for the attainment of this object, students who are thus approved at their first introduction, are admitted upon a probation of three months. The evidences of piety and talents, displayed during this probationary period, determine the full admission of a young candidate.

If the student, at his entrance into the house, should not be possessed of classical literature sufficient to enable him with ease and accuracy to read ordinary Latin and Greek authors, (e. g. Quintilian and Horace, Xenophon and Homer,) he enters on grammatical and classical studies, and attends to them solely till he is judged fit for the next class of pursuits: this period is seldom less than two years, and sometimes it is longer.

The Rev. Thomas Hill, classical and mathematical tutor, conducts this department with distinguished ability, and with an intenseness of application, worthy of the most gateful mention: under his direction, the students read the most valuable Roman and Greek classics, with a strict attention to accuracy of construction, parsing, prosody, and the cultivation of a just and elegant taste for the beauties of those immortal authors. The course thus begun is continued to the close of a student's residence in the college, which, in most cases, is nearly six years. During the two years of pursuits, solely classical and philosophical, attention is also paid to English composition; and themes, on subjects chiefly moral and religious, are composed by those students whom Mr. Hill judges fit; and one day at least, in each fortnight, is spent by him in reviewing and animadverting on these essays.

After the students have entered upon the course, called for the sake of distinction, *academical*, they still continue their attendance upon the classical tutor; and they add to their improving acquaintance with the best authors of profane antiquity, the study of the Hebrew language, and afterwards of the Syriac. They also enjoy his Lectures in Geometry and Algebra, in which Euclid and Bonnycastle's Algebra are the text-books.

The *academical course*, upon which students enter as soon as their proficiency in classical learning renders it proper, is principally theological; but lectures are also regularly read in other departments of science and general knowledge. The duties of the divinity tutor embrace,

I. The Theological department, which comprehends six distinct courses, or plans of instruction.

1. The compilation of a systematical arrangement of Christian Theology, by the judgment and industry of each student himself. Dr. Smith, whose profound classical, theological and biblical knowledge, renders him admirably qualified for the important office which he fills, puts into the hands of the students a large manuscript work, entitled, "First Lines of Christian Theology." This commences with an introductory address, consisting of observations and counsels upon the moral state and dispositions of the mind which are necessary for the profitable study of divine truth;—upon the utility and subserviency of literature and general science for the advancement of theological knowledge, and usefulness in the ministry:—and upon the conduct of the understanding in the actual study of divinity, under its various aspects of liberal and impartial inquiry, interpretation of the Scriptures, and the determination of controversies. This is followed by the syllabus, which forms the body of the work, and consists of definitions, propositions, hints of solution, corollaries, scholia, &c. with references to authors of merit under every particular.

The design of this plan is not only to lead the student into a clear and logical method of deducing divine truth from its proper source, but to engage his industry of research and meditation, to take him to the first fountains of knowledge, and to excite his judgment, his powers of discrimination, and all his talents, to the most profitable kind of exercise. When the student has, with suitable attention and diligence, completed the scheme, he possesses a body of Christian divinity and moral philosophy, thoroughly digested, methodically arranged, the fruit of his own labor and industry, and the systematical depository of his future acquisitions.

2. A Polemical Lecture, designed to furnish a fair and comprehensive view of the most important controversies of the present day: inculcating at the same time, the value and importance of truth, and the absurdity and danger of scepticism or indifference.

3. An Exegetical Lecture on some book of the Greek Testament, generally an epistle.

4. A course on Biblical Criticism, and the principles of sacred philology and interpretation.

5. Lectures on Preaching, and the other duties of the pastoral office. Dr. Doddridge's Lectures on those subjects are the text-book.

6. Lectures on Ecclesiastical History.

II. A course of Lectures on the Elements of Natural Philosophy, Chemistry, and Natural History.

III. A course on Logic and the Philosophy of the Mind.

IV. A course on the study of Civil History and antiquities; attainments prerequisite for that study, observations on historical writers, rules and advices for securing the greatest sum of advantage from the pursuit, and an inquiry into the objects most interesting to a Christian divine, to which the study of history should be rendered subservient.

The preceding statement may be considered as a fair specimen of the usual course of study pursued in the best regulated of our Dissenting colleges. The subject of the preceding memoirs received his education in the truly respectable academy at Hoxton:—over that institution the Rev. Robert Simpson, the Rev. Henry Forster Burder, A. M. and the Rev. —— Hooper, A. M. preside with distinguished ability.*

In these respective academies, public examinations are annually held, in which a close and criti-

* I should be happy to present a statement of the system adopted in that excellent institution, but I am not furnished with materials for the purpose. Such a statement was not deemed necessary by those of whom I requested information. I think it of importance to

cal inquiry is made into the diligence—the acquirements, and the conduct of each student.

No. II.

SPECIMENS OF MR. SPENCER'S EARLY EXERCISES IN PREACHING.

From the following outlines of some of his first sermons may be gathered what was his general style of preaching at the period of their composition.

ON PUBLIC WORSHIP.

Dated March 6, 1807.

MATTHEW XVIII. 20.—"*For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.*"

We shall make a few general observations on the text in the following order:

I. THAT IT IS THE DUTY AND INTEREST OF CHRISTIANS TO ASSEMBLE TOGETHER FOR THE PURPOSES OF RELIGIOUS WORSHIP.

This duty was

1. *Practised by ancient believers.* Zion was the well known place to which the tribes went up—Christ frequented the synagogue. The apostles met together, &c.
2. *It is enjoined in the sacred Scriptures.* See Ps. c. 4. Heb. x. 25.
3. *Fraught with the richest blessings.*

II. THAT IT MUST BE DONE IN THE NAME OF CHRIST.

1. *In obedience to his command.*
2. *In the use of his appointed means.*
3. *In dependance on his assistance.*
4. *With a view to his glory.*

III. THAT ALTHOUGH BUT FEW PERSONS THUS ASSEMBLE, YET THAT IS NO OBJECTION TO THEIR OBTAINING THE DIVINE FAVOR AND BLESSING.

"*Wherever two or three,*" *&c.*

We remark in the first place,

1. *That God regards the sincerity of the worshippers, not their number.*
2. *The happy experience of worshippers in all ages of the world.* As a confirmation of the sentiment,
3. *The positive assertion of the text.*

IV. THAT JESUS IS PRESENT WITH ALL THOSE WHO THUS ASSEMBLE TOGETHER.

How is Christ present in his worshipping assemblies?

For what purpose is Christ present with his worshipping people?

1. *To observe the manner of their worship.*
2. *To bless those who are earnestly seeking him.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. The Lord Jesus Christ is God, or he could not be present in all the assemblies of his people at the same time.
2. How inexcusable is the conduct of those who neglect public worship.
3. How great will be the happiness of the heavenly world, to all the sincere worshippers of Christ.

THE SECOND APPEARING OF CHRIST.

HEBREWS IX. 28.—"*And unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.*"

Let us contemplate,

I. THE GLORIOUS APPEARANCE OF THE SON OF GOD

The text informs us of

1. *Its certainty.* "He *shall* appear," &c.
2. *Its order.* "*The second* time," &c.
3. *Its manner.* "*Without sin*," &c.
4. *The end.* "*Unto salvation.*"

II. THE PERSONS WHO WILL BE HAPPILY INTERESTED IN IT.

To those *who look* for him,

1. *With ardent love.*
2. *With earnest longing.*
3. *With patient waiting.*
4. *With due preparation.*

From this subject permit me to make these remarks:

What a great distinction among mankind will there be at the judgment.

Of what importance is it for us to know whether we are thus looking for him.

In what high estimation should we hold that Saviour who is the first and the last in a sinner's salvation.

THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA.

JOHN IV. 28, 29. "*The woman then left her waterpot and went her way, into the city, and saith to the men, Come see a man which told me all things, whatever I did; is not this the Christ?*"

From the text and its connection we shall draw the three following plain observations:

I. THAT JESUS CHRIST IS POSSESSED OF THE GREATEST EXCELLENCIES.

We shall confine ourselves to those illustrated in his conversation with the woman of Samaria.

1. *Profound humility.* Though he was rich in the glories of his divine nature, he humbled himself and became a man, and so as not to be above holding conversation with a poor woman at a well. Let proud mortals contemplate this and be ashamed.
2. *Consummate wisdom.* He proceeds upon the plan established by the order of the everlasting covenant, and will not fail of converting all his chosen people. He knew where to find this woman—he knew all her circumstances—and what kind of conversation to hold with her.
3. *Ardent benevolence.* It was for the instruction and conversion of this poor woman, that he exerted himself.

II. THAT THOSE WHO ARE ENABLED TO DISCOVER HIS EXCELLENCIES FEEL AN ATTACHMENT TO HIM.

The affection of that soul which has by faith contemplated and discovered the excellencies of Christ, is,

1. *Reasonable.* (Rational.)
2. *Fervent.*
3. *Influential.*

III. THAT THOSE WHO REALLY LOVE HIM ARE ANXIOUS TO RECOMMEND HIM TO OTHERS.

1. *By earnest entreaty.*
2. *By bringing them under the sound of the gospel.*
3. *By prayer to God for them.*
4. *By a holy life.*

IMPROVEMENT.

1. *We here see that there is no worthiness in the instrument employed in a sinner's conversion.*

The Samaritan woman was made useful in directing her fellow citizens to Christ.

2. *This subject affords us a test whereby we may try our own characters.*

Are we really attached to Christ?

3. *Are there any here desirous to see Jesus?*

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mention this, lest I should be considered as *partial*, in giving so minute a detail of the course at Homerton, and saying so little of the plans pursued at Hoxton.

No. III.

CHRIST AT EMMAUS.

LUKE XXIV. 32. "*And they said one to another, did not our hearts burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?*"

The connection of this text shows us, that after the death and resurrection of the great Messiah, two of the disconsolate disciples, who knew not that he was raised from the dead, went to a village called Emmaus; that on their way thither they conversed, as was likely they would do, upon the wonderful events that had lately transpired in Jerusalem, and spake of him they loved. His person—his actions—his sermons—his prophecies—and, above all, his most extraordinary exit occupied their solemn attention, and afforded a subject for the most interesting discourse. Whilst they were thus engaged in conversing about him, with whom they had before been familiar, and from whom they had learned most excellent lessons, a third came up and joined them; this indeed was Jesus of Nazareth, who had been raised from the dead by the glory of the Father. But he chose, for wise ends, to conceal himself from them, and to cause that their eyes should be holden, that they should not know him, appearing to them as a stranger desirous of knowing the subject of their conversation, and the cause of their grief, and to sympathize with them under their sorrow—weeping with them that wept. They intimated to him their wonder that *he*, even supposing that he were but a stranger in Jerusalem, should be unacquainted with the things which were come to pass there in those days; then proceeding to tell him how Jesus, a prophet, mighty in deed and word before God and the people, was condemned to death and crucified; giving him to understand at the same time, that the hopes they had entertained of him were most sanguine, for they trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel; and, finally, they informed him of some peculiar phenomena that had been witnessed by certain women of their acquaintance at his sepulchre, where his body could not be seen, though they saw a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. The courteous and mild fellow traveller then began to speak and detain them with delightful converse; for he showed them "that Christ ought to suffer these things, and then to enter into his glory." He spread before them the mysteries of the inspired page, and showed how they were illustrated in the life and death of their best friend. Sooner than they thought they arrived at their journey's end, where he made as though he would have gone further; but they prevailed on him, by their great importunity, to go in and tarry with them—with them he took bread, blessed it, break it, and gave unto them—then first their eyes were opened to behold him as the same Jesus who was crucified, and to discover in him the lovely features of their Lord who had done all things well—when, lo! he vanished out of their sight, and was seen no more. After which, we may reasonably suppose to have taken place—a solemn silence; and then they used to each other the admirable expression we have selected as a text—"Did not our hearts burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?" Having, then, taken a slight glance at the whole account of this wonderful circumstance, in confining our attention more particularly to the words of the text, we shall view them as leading us to reflect on—the conversation of our Lord with his disciples—and the effects it produced upon their minds—"their hearts burned within them, while he talked with them by the way." Behold

(I.) The conversation of our Lord with his disciples.

And here the passage presents us with the kind familiarity which he displayed, and the lustre that he cast on the divine word—the first remarkable thing in our Lord's conversation with the travellers to Emmaus, is—

(1) The kind familiarity which he displayed—their own expression is, "He talked with us by the way." It is condescension in the Son of God, to notice the concerns and accept the worship of his holy angels; how much more must it be so to sojourn with mankind—to go where they go—and freely to tell them the secrets of his heart. The Saviour was now, you remember, even on earth, a most dignified character—he was now no longer to suffer and be cruelly entreated—he had now finished the work his Father had given him to do—and had shortly after to ascend to claim his high seat in glory. He now showed himself to be the Christ, the Son of God, and confirmed the reality of his appointment and mission, by his bursting the bars of the tomb. He would not now be viewed by any as a common character, but as the most wonderful being that had ever appeared in the world—as such even his enemies must consider him. Yet all this did not make him forget his friends, or cause him to lose any thing of that social and condescending disposition he had ever before manifested: but almost as soon as he was risen, he goes to meet some of the members of his little family, and confirm them further in himself. "He talked with them by the way." Oh! what a heaven does Christ here by his example stamp upon Christian intercourse and sacred friendship. Behold he talks with his disciples, proving to them that "as ointment and perfume rejoice the heart, so doth the sweetness of a man's friend, by hearty counsel." And to this day we are permitted to converse with our God—"he talks with us by the way"—tells us our true character, and reveals his own excellence—he appears as our wonderful counsellor! and to whatever place we journey, we should be concerned to have him talking with us by the way. The next remarkable circumstance in this conversation of our Lord, mentioned in the text, is

(2) The lustre that he cast upon the divine word.—"He talked with us by the way, and opened to us the Scriptures." And well he might, for he told us before that "the Lord had given him the tongue of the learned; that he should know how to speak a word in season, to him that is weary." "He began," says the evangelist, "at Moses and all the prophets, and expounded to them in all the Scriptures, the things concerning himself"—blessed interpreter—divine teacher. We have no reason to suppose that he forgot the first promise that was made of him; even in the garden of Eden, that he should bruise the head of the serpent: no doubt but the intended sacrifice of Isaac, the patriarch's son—the erection of the brazen serpent on the pole—and the various sacrifices under the law, were all delightfully commented on by Jesus the Saviour. He did justice to all the passages—he showed their full import—he gave them an insight into the meaning of all the prophecies respecting his death and glory—he took up every part of Scripture in its bearing upon himself, he showed [that he] was "all in all"—even in the Old Testament; and thus by his teachings they discovered far more of the beauty, harmony, and fulfilment of the word of God, than they ever did before, or ever would have done without his instruction. And does he not now give his people to understand the doctrines of his word—does he not now daily open to us the Scriptures—has he not given to us his Holy Spirit in order to make us more wise in the mysteries of his kingdom—and are we not di-

rected to seek for him in the field of divine truth as for hid treasure. Oh! how much is there respecting Christ in this holy book, and who is so able to make us know it as himself—"he opens our understanding that we may understand the Scriptures"—he ever teaches his ministers to open and allege "that Christ must needs have suffered and risen again from the dead, and that this Jesus whom we preach unto you is Christ,"—as he taught his apostles to "testify the kingdom of God, persuading men concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening." Having then admired the conversation of our Lord with his disciples on the way to Emmaus, we notice

II. The effects it produced in their minds.

It was not at all probable that this discourse should be without effect, or fail deeply to interest their minds, since it was the very theme on which they chose to dwell; and it was conducted in so wise and endearing a manner—it was such that, according to their own confession, it made their hearts to burn within them while he talked with them by the way—and surely I need not say this was not the glow of *shame*, lest they should be found in his company—No, brethren, they would not have cared who of all the great men of the land had met them in company with this most intelligent stranger—they felt themselves highly honored by his company, even before they knew his name. Nor was this the heat of *anger*, or of any bad passion excited by any thing that he delivered; his communications were sweet, and soothing. Had they been so disposed, they could find nothing in them that was improper, untrue, or provoking;—he talked with them as a man talks with his friend; the communion was sweet, and the intercourse highly gratifying; hence, though their hearts burned within them, it was neither with shame, nor anger. But this, brethren, permit me to say, was the glow of fixed surprise; of grateful feeling, of humble love, and of holy animation of soul. Observe it was the glow

(1) of fixed surprise.

They wondered much that he who appeared a stranger, not only to them, but also to the place where they were, should know so much about them, Jerusalem and Jesus; they were astonished at his wisdom, at his eloquence. I almost fancy that they exclaimed, "Never man spake like this man." With emotions of amazement, they perceived that his "word was quick and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow; and that it is a discoverer of the thoughts and intents of the heart." With what prying eyes must they have looked upon him; and yet not so as to behold him who he was, because himself had prevented it; yet their hearts burned within them; sentiments of unutterable admiration were hid in their breasts whilst he opened to them the Scriptures. Again it was the glow

(2) of grateful feeling.

They must have discovered that they were greatly indebted to this benevolent stranger, who had so effectually enlightened their judgments, and alleviated their sorrows. Their hearts burned within them with the sensation of thankfulness; they saw that he was a praiseworthy character, and, methinks, were devising some acknowledgments for his attention to them, little thinking that it was the Lord. Did your hearts ever glow in this way with a sense of utter incapability of making any suitable returns to him that loved you, and revealed to you his will? For your fellowship with him, have you ever said, what shall I render to the Lord? Did you ever feel the high honor of being with Jesus; admitted into his presence, and being made partakers of his grace? All your hearts Christians, should glow with gratitude, and burn with love. Hence, we remark again, their hearts burned within them with the sensation

(3) of humble love.

Finding as they did, that his words "were found of them, and they did eat them," and they were to them the joy and the rejoicing of their hearts, they manifested a strong attachment to him whom they supposed to be a new friend. He engaged their affections, hence they desired more of his company, and said, when their fears were excited lest he should depart from them; "Abide with us, for it is toward evening." So do the hearts of the people of God burn within them to the present day, with like sensations, under similar enjoyments; the flame of divine love is kindled in their souls; the words of his mouth appear to them sweeter than the honey of the honeycomb; his doctrine drops like the rain, and distils like the dew, and sensible that none teacheth like him, they admire and love him before all others. Oh! how excellent a thing it is thus to love the Saviour. Let it be our happiness to sit at his feet; and with meekness receive the ingrafted word of truth, which is able to save the soul, so shall its admirable Author rise daily more and more in our estimation. Finally it was the glow

(4) of holy animation of soul.

Divine light broke in upon their minds, and dispersed their remaining unbelief; they were elevated above the world to the contemplation of their adorable Redeemer. He touched their finest feelings; he filled their souls with the sublime joys of his salvation; he inspired them with pure devotion, and fixedness of heart, and while he led them to the consideration of Him who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, he prevented them from being weary and fainting in their minds. And oh! Christians, what sweet moments; rich in blessing, have you enjoyed, when in converse with Immanuel. "Whether in the body, or out of the body," you have hardly been able to tell; drops of heaven have been bestowed upon you here below, the light of the Divine countenance has caused you to take your harp from the willows, and make every string speak to the praise of love divine. Did not your hearts burn within you? Were you not like Peter on the mount, who, in an ecstasy of joy said, "Lord, it is good to be here?" You anticipated the joys of the blessed, you drank of the brook by the way, and seemed ready to depart and to be with Christ, to drink wine new with him, in the kingdom of his Father. This holy delight in God is real, and not enthusiastic; it is bestowed only on the new born heirs of grace, and it is given them as a pledge of joys to come; their hearts burn within them while he talks with them by the way.

In reflecting on this subject we are struck with the idea that we often have to blame ourselves for not sufficiently estimating our mercies during the time of their continuance.

These disciples, notwithstanding the pleasure they had found in his society, did not, till just as he left them, discover him to be their Lord; to the present day Joseph often knows his brethren, whilst they know him not. And then afterwards they say, did not our hearts burn within us? True, they did. But why did not we value the blessing while we enjoyed it? Why did we not say, as the word of wisdom dropped from his mouth, it is the Lord?

Again, a review of past favors greatly supports the mind under present bereavements.

When we seem forsaken; when our affections towards Christ appear but cold, oh! what a privilege it is to be enabled to revert to a period when our hearts did burn within us, while he talked with us by the way. This thought cheers the drooping spirits, and raises the fainting head; it excites our

hope too, that he will be with us again, and hold converse with us, even till the hour of death; yea, it makes us argue, that if the Lord had intended to destroy us, he would not have made our hearts burn within us by his divine communications.

It is the duty and interest of us all earnestly to pray for the society and conversation of Christ.

The blessing itself is so desirable, for it is to have the honor of dwelling and walking with Christ, and the sensations which he, by his discourse, excites in the mind, are so pleasing, and delightful, that we ought earnestly to beseech him to tarry with us; if he is an instructer and companion, how short will the distance to heaven appear, and how light and momentary the trials of the way—Lastly,

If those who travel with the Saviour, are thus blessed, how miserable are they who are altogether alienated from him.

Sinners, you never yet enjoyed the society of Christ, nor do you wish it. You are loading him with reproaches, and will have none of his counsel, and he will never say of you, "they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy;" the fever of lust, and the torment of envy shall be your curse, while you live in the pains of hell, your portion after death, when you will burn in "the fire that never can be quenched, and the smoke of your torments shall ascend up for ever and ever." Oh! may we instead of this awful doom, be honored and glorified with his constant presence in a better world; so shall the chosen of Nazareth be praised and adored by us for ever and ever.

No. IV.

FAREWELL SERMON AT HOXTON.

Acts xx. 24. "*But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.*"

This is not the language of stoical apathy; the man who uttered these words, my hearers, was a man possessed of the keenest sensibility; a man of real, honest, and exquisite feeling; in his heart, cold indifference, and unfeeling stubbornness, had no place; nor do the words express philosophical heroism; a foolish bravado; for our apostle derives: his support from sources far different from these; he was animated by principles; he was delighted with prospects which the natural man never possesses; the power of which principles, and the view of which prospects, produce an effect which is mighty beyond all conception. The passage I have read you, introduces to our view Paul the preacher, at the time of his departure from his friends, when his mind was led to expect, and prepared to meet bonds and afflictions in every place; and the words of the text do most strikingly show us the way in which the principles of the gospel discover themselves, and prove their power to strengthen and support. Viewing this passage as not unsuitable to the present opportunity, I shall exhibit it to your view, as showing us that the principles of the gospel of Christ display their power and virtue.

I. In rendering us insensible to the power of affliction; "none of these things move me."

II. In raising us superior to the love of life; "neither count I my life dear unto me, so that I may finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus." Let us behold here the glorious gospel of the blessed God. How the religion of Christ displays its potent influence; its mighty efficacy.

I. In rendering us insensible to the power of affliction. Its supports enabled the holy, zealous apostle to say of painful separation—of the labors of the ministry, and of the large measure of persecution which in that age of the church every where attended the preachers of the gospel, "none of these things move me." Paul had, however, without doubt, the feelings of humanity; and as I have already intimated, these things would affect his soul as a *man*, and occasionally overwhelm his spirits; but when he felt the happy influence of the gospel in all its power, he triumphed over these difficulties; he heroically conquered himself; subdued his own feelings, and appeared a ready, a joyful martyr for Christ. Thus did Paul, yet did not he, but the grace of God which was in him. These trials, then, these difficulties, which to many would be insurmountable, did not "move" him; that is, the anticipation of them, the endurance of them, did not so move him as to damp his *ardor;* as to discourage his soul, or as to make him wish to exchange with the world. Observe, they did not so move him

As to damp his ardor. These trials and apparent obstacles to the success of his work, and to his own happiness in it, did not make him less anxiously desirous of doing good in the world, did not at all diminish the fervent wishes of his soul to be the means of conducting many sons unto glory. Notwithstanding these difficulties, he was still "steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as he knew that his labor was not in vain in the Lord." And as he had this ministry, as he had received mercy, so he fainted not; hence he could say to others; no man should be moved by these afflictions, for yourselves know that we were appointed thereunto. He remembered the long cloud of witnesses, who through much tribulation had entered the kingdom, and he determined to imitate their example; he did more, he considered Jesus, who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself; and this prevented him from being weary, or from fainting in his mind: he looked unto Jesus the author and finisher of his faith, and by that means obtained encouragement to proceed, and grace sufficient for him. Oh! never let the servants of the most high God relax in their endeavors to do good, or grow cold in their desires after the immortal welfare of mankind because some difficulties await them: of these difficulties they ought to say "none of these things move me." Nor did these trials so affect the apostle

As to discourage his soul; that is, to make him shrink at the thought of enduring them; to make him afraid to meet them; no, for, supported by the consolations of the gospel, he could welcome reproaches, pain and death; yea, rejoice and be exceeding glad that he was counted worthy to suffer for the sake of the Lord Jesus. "What mean ye," says he elsewhere, "what mean ye to weep and to break mine heart, for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." Divine grace so supported him, that though he was troubled on every side, he was not distressed; though perplexed, he was not in despair; though persecuted, he was not forsaken; though cast down, he was not destroyed. I suffer, says he, these things, nevertheless I am not ashamed, "for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him, until that day." Thus he could endure, and the Saviour enabled him to suffer as well as to preach for him, and none of these things moved him.

Finally, they did not so move him as to make him wish to exchange with the world.

Because he thus reckoned, that the sufferings of this present life are not worthy to be compared with the glory that should be revealed in us. He saw that "our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." He looked not at the things

which are seen, which are temporal, but at the things which are not seen, which are eternal. There was a pleasure even connected with the sufferings which far excelled the joy of worldlings: hence he says "I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulations." For the Lord stood by him and strengthened him; yea, the Lord delivered him from every evil work, and preserved him to his heavenly kingdom. The apostle, taught by the Spirit of God, loved even the difficulties of his Master's service far better than the ease and the pleasures of the world. Oh! that like him, we may wisely count the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of this world; prefer even the worst, the most painful circumstances in the cause of the Saviour, to the most fascinating pleasures of the world; to the enjoyments which the men who know not God, reckon most valuable and most dear; thus shall we show that we are willing to be any thing that the Saviour chooses, so that he may be glorified: thus shall we show that we speak the feelings of our hearts, when we say of the difficulties of our work, "none of these things move me." Thus was the apostle enabled to enjoy strong consolations in the midst of trials. Thus did Immanuel's grace quicken him to diligence and fortify his mind against the numerous ills that flesh is heir to. Oh! that the Spirit of glory and of God would rest on us also; that all our duties may be so discharged, and all our trials so endured, as that the power of the gospel may be evinced, and the supporting grace of the great Head of the Church abundantly magnified. And what can so teach us to endure trials as the religion of Christ? What supports have infidels, mere moralists, and speculative philosophers, like those which may be derived from the fulness of our Lord Jesus Christ? Theirs are refuges of lies, ours a never failing foundation. "Their rock is not as our rock, even our enemies themselves being judges." The gospel of Christ presents the only sovereign balm for human wo; it supplies us with real, and with sure support; it emboldens us to say, in the face of difficulties, dangers, and death, "None of these things move me." The gospel, however, does not merely display its power in rendering us insensible to the power of affliction, but

II. In raising us superior to the love of life.

For, adds the apostle, "neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I may finish my course with joy." "Skin for skin, yea all that a man hath, will he give for his life." The preservation of life is the first law of nature. That man is unworthy the character of a rational being, who intentionally shortens, or daringly terminates his own life. And yet here a man comes forward and says, "neither count I my life dear unto myself"—and he is taught to form this estimation of life too, by the gospel of Jesus! How is this? The apostle did not choose strangling rather than life; but the case may be stated thus. The gospel taught him the right use of life, and made him earnestly to desire to fulfil it; the gospel taught him as a minister, that life was only valuable to him so far as he accomplished its purposes—the joyful completion of his Christian race, the honorable close of his ministerial exertions. Further than this, life was not dear to him, or highly prized by him, for he was willing to be "absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." His earnest expectation and his hope was, that in nothing he should be ashamed, but that "with all boldness, as always, so now, Christ should be magnified in his body, whether it were by life or by death." "Yea," says he, "and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all." Oh! what a noble principle is this that renders a man willing to suffer and to die for Christ, "for herein perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us; and we ought also to lay down our lives for the brethren." And now it is said of the apostle, and all who like him triumphed over Satan, "they were faithful unto death." They overcome him by the blood of the Lamb, for they loved not their lives unto death. But I digress from the subject. Observe, then, that the gospel raised the mind of Paul superior to the love of life, as it showed him that it was only useful for two purposes:

(1.) That he might joyfully complete his Christian race. So he says, "that I may finish my course, with joy." The course to which he alludes is the Christian race, which he had some time before undertaken in divine strength. God had called him so to run, that he might obtain, and hence he "laid aside every weight, and the sin which so easily beset him, and ran with patience the race set before him, looking unto Jesus." He set out with a full determination never to grow weary, or to decline his eager pursuit after glory, honor and immortality. Hitherto he had pursued it with alacrity; he did not count himself to have apprehended; but this one thing he did, forgetting those things which were behind, and reaching forth unto those things which were before, he pressed toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Personal religion had flourished in his soul, and he had not left the path marked out for him, by the great forerunner, to be led aside either to the right hand or to the left, and now he wished to finish it with joy; and that man finishes his course with joy when he expresses gratitude for any ardor he has discovered in it, and when he has a full view of the crown of glory, and prospect of eternal rest. To finish our course with joy, we must express our gratitude for the assistance grace has offered us in it. [When a Christian can say, through the good hand of my God upon me, the care of his love, and the animation of his grace, "I have finished my course."] Oh! what pleasure it must afford a believer who completes his race on earth, to look back upon the path he has trod, and to remember even the trials he endured, and to bless God that he was enabled to persevere to the end. The Christian race cannot be joyfully completed without a bright prospect of eternal glory and a splendid crown. The man finished this race with joy who could say, "henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me in that day." Let others run to obtain a curruptible crown, we do it for an incorruptible. And oh! that when we finish our course it may be with this firm persuasion, that we shall enter into the joy of our Lord, where toil and fatigue will be known no more. For this purpose life is of use, as it conducts us to the end of the Christian race. But the apostle views himself not only as a Christian but as a minister of the New Testament, and therefore he views life as desirable.

(2.) That he might honorably close his ministerial exertions. That I may finish, says he, my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus. Here you behold the author of the gifts and the graces of ministers, "the Lord Jesus." The Lord had said of Paul, "he is a chosen vessel unto me to bear my name unto the Gentiles." And he had received his ministry of the Lord Jesus. The subjects of his ministry came from him, or he taught him to preach human depravity—the atonement of Christ, and the influence of the Spirit, and to be witness unto all, for Jesus, of what he had seen and heard. His call to the ministry was from the Lord Jesus. He told him to publish the gospel, and immediately he conferred not with flesh and blood. He was an apostle not of man, nor by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the

Father. His qualifications for the ministry came from the Lord Jesus—he gave him a freedom of speech—he made him apt to teach—he furnished him with wisdom and knowledge—he made him a minister that needed not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. His success in the ministry was from the Lord Jesus—he made him fruitful, and he made him useful—he opened the hearts of his hearers—he attended his message with the power of his Spirit—he gave testimony to the word of his grace. Thus he assisted him in his work—owned him as an honored servant, nor suffered him to labor in vain, or spend his strength for nought. Now, he wishes to close this ministry with joy. He does not want to leave it—to quit it for worldly ease; but to go on in it to the end of his life. He does not wish to grow weary in well doing; but to persevere to the last; and thus finishing his work, he would do it with joy, as he would review instances of usefulness, and behold the grace of the Lord of the harvest, in raising up more laborers to enter into his vineyard. A minister closes his work with joy, when he reviews instances of usefulness, when he knows that there are many whom he may view as his joy and crown of rejoicing—that he shall have to say of a goodly number, here am I, Father, and the children which thou hast given me. Thus our Lord rejoiced at the close of his labors, saying, "I have given them thy word—I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." So also does the good minister finish his course with joy, when he beholds other laborers crowned with success in the vineyard—when he dies with the full confidence that Zion's glory increases, and that the work of the Lord is promoted. He rejoices that others shall enter into his labors, and that by their exertions, the Saviour will be honored when he is cold in dust. Thus he rejoices, that instead of the fathers, he raises up the children, and that the Saviour's name shall be known to all generations. Happy man; like Simeon, thou shalt depart in peace—like him, thou shalt have the Saviour enclosed in thine arms, and eternal glory full in thy view.

Let those of us who are aged in the ministry imitate the apostle's example.

Students be diligent—honor Christ, and the Holy Spirit—aim sincerely to do good—be not afraid of difficulties—let us go on, &c. &c.

In so doing, we shall both save ourselves and those that hear us. Amen.

No. V.

ADDRESS AT LAYING THE FOUNDATION-STONE OF THE NEW CHAPEL.

"*And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house.*" So said the patriarch Jacob on a memorable occasion, and so may we say, assembled as we are to lay the foundation-stone of an edifice to God. We have found out a place for the Lord—an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob: beholding this spot of ground on this interesting morning, a thousand delightful sensations pervade our souls, and we are ready to anticipate the presence of the Great Eternal in this place, or "is not this the hill which God hath chosen to dwell in it for ever?" Let us please ourselves with believing, that here holy incense shall ascend to God—that from this place the voice of prayer and praise shall rise tuneful to the court of heaven—that here pious men shall enjoy the sublime happiness of devotion—that here the ungodly and the sinner shall be induced to begin their lives anew. How often may many have to say, on the very ground we tread, "How dreadful is this place! this is none other than the house of God, and the gate of heaven." The master of worshipping assemblies, Jehovah, by whose call congregations assemble, and by whose blessing their souls are benefited, may here afford his watchful care, his animating smiles: we have every reason to believe he will do it, entreated by the earnest and fervent supplications of the men he loves; himself inclined to bless the gates of Zion, his eyes and his heart shall be here perpetually; with pleasure will he behold the favored spot; and in the liberality of his heart afford to his assembled saints an earnest, a foretaste, a lively representation of what those happy spirits know and feel who are ever with the Lord.

We flatter ourselves, that the erection of an edifice like this is the effect of benevolent feeling to mankind, and an ardent love to the Great Lord of all. We unite in endeavoring to maintain the honor of the Saviour's name, and to support the glory of his cross. We feel, and deeply too, the necessity of possessing somewhat more than this earth can afford: we regard men as immortals, and we know that there are blessings, without the enjoyment of which, those souls will experience continued disappointment here, and will languish forever in another world. These necessary and holy blessings, the Eternal has chosen to communicate by the instrumentality of a preached gospel. We know that Jehovah, in making up the number of his elect, works by means; therefore it is that we endeavor to bring that gospel, the report of which is indeed a joyful sound, to the ears of mankind, praying that the blessed Spirit would send it to their hearts. The erection of this place is a direct attack against—against whom? say my hearers, alarmed at the idea of hostility—against the Church of England? No! God forbid; the very reverse of all this. We cheerfully take the present opportunity of informing this numerous auditory, that the doctrines which will be proclaimed on this ground will exactly correspond, will be just the same, with those contained in the doctrinal articles of the Church of England, which are the bulwarks of its faith, and may be read in most of the Books of Common Prayer. Is it, then, you ask again, an attack against any other congregation, or body of professing Christians? My soul revolts and spurns at the idea; for in the cause of Immanuel we wish cordially and constantly to unite with all those who believe in the Lord Jesus, both theirs and ours. But in one word, this is an attack directed against the kingdom of Satan, and the prince of darkness. Its object is the translation of our fellow creatures from his hateful power and dominion, and their transition into the family of the blessed household of their Redeemer. With the sword of the Spirit we wish to combat the old serpent the devil. In this large and populous town he has maintained his seat, he has reigned and triumphed: we long to see him fall, like lightning from heaven; and hence we preach that glorious gospel, which opposes his works, which rescues from his power, which gives us to expect a final triumph over him and his followers.

Here we expect that the preaching of the cross will be heard—that self righteousness will in no shape meet with encouragement—that man will be represented as nothing, and Christ as all in all. We erect no altar to an unknown God, but are boldly confessing, that we wish every day to approach the Father of Spirits, through the mediation of God our Saviour, and all this by the gracious aid of the Holy Spirit. And are any of us so hardened, through the deceitfulness of sin, as not to wish that here many souls may be born to God—may be trained up for heaven; or shall we not, at the last great day, rejoice to see a goodly company of men, who on this spot shall have met with the Saviour Jesus, and commenced an honorable path to heaven. We rejoice in the thought, that the cause is God's, and must prevail, and with pleasure we celebrate

the growing empire of our King. His church must flourish, because it is purchased with his blood, and preserved by his grace. The names of the several denominations among which it is scattered may be lost and forgotten, but its numbers shall increase, and its honors spread to the end of time.

The Episcopalian church may totter to the ground; the Presbyterian church may be known no more; the Independent church may no longer exist as a separate body; but the *true* church, made up of many of all these, and confined to no one of them, shall increase yet more and more, and ever be acknowledged the Zion of the Lord, the city of the Holy One of Israel.

This morning have we cause for gratitude, that amidst the spread of infidelity, and a vain philosophy, the work of God is not forgotten: that still his churches rise and flourish; that still souls are born to God, and the saints shout aloud for joy. In the sanctuaries where we worship, we have the solace of our cares, a kind refreshment afforded us in our journey to heaven, and new light and joy bestowed. May all this be known amongst us—be known by posterity when we are cold in death.

I cannot lose sight of the opportunity which this morning affords me, of assuring this large and mixed assembly, that real religion is a personal thing; that the gospel we preach must be believed, and its consolations enjoyed, or there remains for us no hope of pardon or of peace. My fellow immortals you have all sinned, and come short of the glory of God; but we exhibit to you a blessed and perfect Redeemer! Believe in him, and you shall not be confounded world without end. And when I meet you in an assembly far larger and more solemn than this, I mean at the judgment day, you shall be accepted of him; yea, believing in him, you shall then enter a temple, not made with hands eternal in the heavens; and for ever adore the hand that formed it, the grace that conducted us to it, and the Saviour who fills it with his glory. Amen.*

On Wednesday, May 29, 1812, the chapel was solemnly dedicated to God. On this interesting occasion, the Rev. P. S. Charrier, of Bethseda chapel, Liverpool, commenced the morning service by reading a suitable portion of Scripture, and offering up a solemn and appropriate prayer. The Rev. William Jay, of Bath, delivered a sermon from Psalm cxxii. 6, "They shall prosper that love thee." The Rev. Mr. Lister, of Lime-street chapel, concluded by prayer. In the evening, the service was opened by reading of the Scriptures and prayer, by the Rev. Jos. Fletcher, A. M. of Blackburn. The Rev. Dr. Collyer, of Peckham, preached from 1 John iv. 8, "God is love." The Rev. Mr. Kershaw of Edinburgh, concluded by prayer.

No. VI.

MR. SPENCER'S ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONS PROPOSED TO HIM, AT HIS ORDINATION.

What motives have induced you to enter upon the important work of the Christian Ministry?

As the religion of the Bible appears in my estimation the best blessing Jehovah has bestowed upon the world, I, from the humble hope that it has shed its influence on my own heart, am impressed with an earnest wish to be the instrument of conveying its holy advantages to my fellow immortals! I say from the hope that I am interested in its blessings; for in no one sentiment am I more fully established, than that the ministers of God should be men of God; that personal religion is a most indispensable requisite in all who grasp at the honor of being the servants of Christ and his churches. That it has pleased God, who has separated me from my mother's womb, to call me by his grace, and reveal his Son in me, I am led to *hope*, or I dare not think of the Christian ministry! From my earliest infancy, having been blest with a religious education, my mind was powerfully impressed with the solemnities of death and judgment: and often have such impressions been the means of drawing me to earnest secret prayer, at a very early period of my existence. Yet did I, as I advanced in age and stature, give proofs, awfully evident, frequently *since* distressing to my mind, of the dreadful depravity of my nature, and of the necessity of that great change, which I then accurately judged had not really passed on my soul. But God remembered me in mercy! The Holy Spirit made use of the preaching of the gospel at Hertford by various ministers of our own denomination, as also by several in the connection of the late Countess of Huntingdon, to enlighten my mind in the knowledge of him; gradually he drew me to himself; and, I trust, imparted to me, for my best treasure, his *love* in my heart, the salvation of Christ, with its attendant blessings. Viewing myself, then, as a young sinner, blest with special favors, I determined I would not live to myself, but to Him who I believed had loved me, and given himself for me. I cast myself upon his care; I implored his direction as to my future steps; I longed to be engaged in the holy ministry, yet God is my record that I trembled at the idea of rushing into his service; of assuming, with daring temerity, a character I was so unfit to bear. I resolved that I would wait for the direction of his providence, and then go on in his strength. Christian friends urged me to devote myself to the work of the Lord; my own mind eagerly seconded their proposals; yet the consideration of my youth, and the dread that I was unprepared for the employment, held me back from the attempt, till after a little while my acquaintance with Mr. Thomas Wilson commenced: encouraged by him in the hope that I might be a laborer for God, I commenced preparatory studies for the ministry, under the direction of my honored friend, the Rev. William Hordle, of Harwich, and, recommended by him, entered the seminary at Hoxton. Thus, Sir, a persuasion of the great importance of the preaching of the gospel, a consciousness that God had imparted to me that *tone* of mind which seemed adapted to the employment, the earnest wishes of intelligent and useful Christians, the clear and evident direction of Divine Providence, and, I hope, the glow of zeal for the honor of our glorious Redeemer and the good of man, united together to direct my coming to the ministry of the word.

Why do you choose to exercise your Ministry among Protestant Dissenters?

The close alliance of the church of England with the state, were there no other argument against it, would be enough to influence my mind in refusing to enter within its pale. But my conscience also objects to many of the terms of communion it imposes, and its acknowledgment of a human head; to several of its prescribed ceremonies, which appear to me unlike the simplicity that is in Christ, and very unnatural characteristics of a kingdom which cannot be of this world. Yet, while these are my decided sentiments, I shall always respect and love the zealous followers of the Lamb, whom Heaven acknowledges, as his friends among the members of the established church. May grace, mercy, and peace, ever be with them; may the work of God succeed among them. From

*This is evidently but a rude outline of what was delivered on that interesting occasion. The effect produced upon the immense auditory which he addressed was remarkably strong—and every effect must have an adequate cause.

all that I can collect from the New Testament, it appears obvious to me, that all that is meant by a church of Christ, is a company of faithful men determining to unite together in his faith and service —bowing to his directions—submissively yielding themselves up to him—and resolving to walk in all his ordinances and commandments, blameless! These churches are, I believe, to be found among those of the congregational order, and therefore I am united to them.

What are the principal topics on which you mean to insist in your future ministrations?

My earnest ambition, Sir, is to declare the *whole counsel* of God and to give to every one his portion of meat in due season. In order that this may be effectually done, I know that the Mediator's excellencies must be particularly displayed, and the glories of the cross largely insisted on. I intend, Sir, in humble dependence on the strength of Christ, without regarding either the smiles or the frowns of man, to endeavor to approve myself the faithful servant of God. In my discourses, Christ shall be all in all. His person, work, and great salvation, shall be constantly exhibited in their bearings, upon every part of the scheme of religion I have beheld in the Bible, and admired. The solemn truth, that man is totally depraved, and altogether defiled by sin; the necessity of regeneration; the suitableness of the atonement our Lord has made; the nature and blessedness of the influences of the Holy Spirit; the various consolations and directions contained in the gospel of Christ, shall all be illustrated and discussed in my ministry, according to the ability Jehovah shall bestow. The doctrines of grace shall maintain a high precedence in all my ministrations: yet will I, with the most industrious care, labor to show that they are doctrines according to *godliness*. The holiness of the religion of Christ shall be enforced from every subject. Thus will I labor to secure the approbation of God, to preserve an honest and good conscience, to promote the glory of the great and precious Redeemer of sinners, and to win souls to Christ. The terrors of the Lord shall be declared to the ungodly; the sure support of our covenant Lord shall be preached to the faithful; and *Christ* shall be preached to all.

CONFESSION OF FAITH.

I do, Sir, with pleasure, in the presence of this congregation, deliver to you the sentiments I hold dear to my heart, and those views of the truth as it is in Jesus; which, having imbibed myself, I intend to communicate to my fellow men. The sentiments I hold, I trace up to their source when I mention the Bible, the book of God, which holy volume, attested by every evidence that consistency, dignity, purity, miracles, and divine effects can afford, I receive as the standard of truth, as God's revelation of his own mind and will to men. Regarding the Bible, then, as able to make us wise unto salvation, I receive as positive and important truths, all that it teaches concerning God, the world, salvation, heaven, and hell. I believe then, from the testimony of divine truth, that God is a spirit, holy, infinite, unchangeable, and perfect in all the attributes of deity. That in the *Godhead*, there are *three* divine and glorious persons, equal in power and honor—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This sublime mystery I dare not attempt to explain; because I know, that we cannot by searching find out God, nor trace the Almighty to perfection. Yet do I most cordially receive the fact, admiring the various parts each of them has undertaken in the economy of our salvation, and adoring a *triune* God as the proper object of Christian worship. I believe that Jehovah's omniscience foresaw from all eternity all the events that should take place in the universe, and that he orders all things after the counsel of his own will. I believe that his almighty power created all the things that do appear, and still supports and upholds them in the state of existence in which he has wisely placed them. I believe that the persons in the Godhead did, foreseeing the fall and ruin of Adam and his posterity, enter into a covenant engagement with each other, that through their grace, the lost rebel might be restored to divine favor and friendship, and to communion with the whole Trinity. In this covenant, I believe all the blessings of grace are deposited for all the faithful; Christ is its surety. He has made that atonement this covenant secured, and the blessed Spirit communicates the happy effects of it to the souls of all good men. It was by virtue of the arrangement of this covenant that Christ appeared once in the end of time, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. Gradual discoveries of his glory have been made to the Jewish church; but at length he came to redeem Jacob, to ransom him out of the hand of him that was stronger than he. By his sufferings, his obedience unto death, and the whole of his mediatorial work, I believe he has purchased the church; redeemed and saved the goodly company of men, who by the Eternal Father were for this purpose given into his hands before time began. And having on earth finished the work given him to do, I believe that he ascended to glory, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, and ever liveth to make intercession for sinners, that their corruptions may be purified, their graces may be matured, and they be finally with him, where he is, to behold his glory. I believe that the Holy Spirit works on the human mind, when the time, the set time, to favor the individual, is come; that he affects the heart with compunction for sin; that by the instrumentality of the gospel, he calls the sinner out of darkness into marvellous light; that by the influence of divine truth, he sanctifies the soul; that by the application of the promises of Scripture, and by his own internal witness, he gives strong consolation to the heirs of God, for such I consider those whom he has convinced of sin, and led to Jesus; called, enlightened, sealed, and established, they give evidence of a divine work upon their souls, by appearing in the beauties of holiness; by adorning the doctrine of God, their Saviour, in all things; such characters I believe that Jehovah views as his church on earth; his family below, only separated by death from the blest society above; and for their sakes all nature stands; to promote their present and eternal happiness, the gospel was published in the world; ministers have been commissioned to serve the Lord, and qualified for the office; separate churches have been raised; the ordinances of Christ's appointment, viz. the Lord's supper administered to believers in Jesus; and Baptism, designed for those who from heathen countries were proselyted to the Christian faith, and for all the infants of believers—have been preserved amongst us. In their hearts, the fruits of grace must abound; they must walk with God, and be conformed to the divine image. Such characters must, I believe, endure to the end, and be saved; their perseverance, I consider as resting on the power of God, on the nature of the covenant—Divine faithfulness, and the very tendency of the principles of grace. I consider justification from sin; the pardon of every offence; the gradual sanctification of the soul, and its preparation for heaven, as all blessings of grace, freely bestowed upon the unworthy; obtained without money and without price. I view the preaching of the gospel as God's appointed means for the translation of sinners from darkness to light, and for the edification

of his mystical body, the church, by the exhibition of Christ crucified, it had pleased God to save them that believe.

Through the grace of God, every humble believer will, I know, eventually appear before the Saviour in glory everlasting. To that state of joy and felicity, I believe all real Christians to be daily tending; and am happily persuaded, from the testimony of God, that those who serve him here shall reign with him above. Hence the spirit of a good man, when it is separated from the body, is by its beloved Saviour, received to the final dwelling of the just, where it waits for the time appointed for the trumpet to sound, and the dead to be raised, to be again united to the body, then glorified, and made like the body of the Redeemer.

I anticipate sir, the last judgment—I believe that God is coming to vindicate the right of his own government; to declare the equity of his holy providence, at which we have in our ignorance often murmured; to banish the impenitent, the unholy, and all who would not obey the gospel, into torments, more awful than we can ever imagine, and lasting as the existence of the soul. On that day, sir, I believe that we shall give an account of ourselves unto God, and if found clothed in the Mediator's righteousness, we shall be declared approved of God, and welcomed to the joys of heaven. This, sir, is the outline of what I conceive to be the faith delivered to the saints; these are the fixed principles I have cordially received myself, and intend to make known to others. Oh! that my faith in them may be operative and influential, in supporting my mind under the severe, sharp trials, with which my Father in heaven has thought fit to exercise me; and may I be enabled, in simplicity and godly sincerity, to declare these truths to the people of my charge.

In the presence of God, then, his holy angels, those his servants in the ministry, and this assembled congregation, I resign myself, my body and soul, my ministry, my all, to the care and protection of the Great Head of the Church.

"The Lord God of my fathers be with me, as he was with them: let him not leave me, nor forsake me." And I most earnestly and humbly request the prayers of my own congregation, of my brethren and fathers in the ministry, and of all who witness these solemnities, that God would enable me to fulfil the duties of my sphere, that he would ever preserve me from backsliding in religion, that he would fix my wayward heart, and preserve it alive to God; that the ministry be not blamed.

I do solemnly determine, as far as in me lies, to live to his glory; to set a watch over my temper, speech and deportment, that they may not disgrace the gospel of Christ. I purpose, relying on the all-sufficient grace of the Master whom I serve, that I will be instant in season and out of season; that I will reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering; that I will labor as for God, and as in the immediate prospect of eternity. May he assist me to instruct the ignorant—to cheer and direct the sick and the dying—to influence the young to rise and follow Christ—and to do real and extensive good in this large and populous town; and when I have done the labors allotted for me below, after having spent a holy and an useful life—oh! may I but hear the Lord say, "well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of thy Lord." Amen.

ADDITIONAL PAPERS.

No. VII.

I think that it must have been apparent from the preceding narrative, that Spencer's great object was usefulness. He seemed in his pursuits to be perfectly insensible to the influence of every other principle, than the love of Christ, and the souls of men. Hence if he attained not to the same eminence in literature with some of his own age and standing, it is not to be attributed either to the want of opportunities or of talents. A mind richly endowed, and naturally ardent, as was his, might have attained any object to which it had consecrated its superior powers. Spencer early selected his. To this he devoted all the faculties of his soul. His mind seemed never for a moment diverted from it; and in this, as might be expected, he excelled. He neither was nor wished to be accounted a great scholar. A gentleman, intimately acquainted with Spencer, and formerly a student in the same institution, and whose estimate of his character and talents is, perhaps, as correct as any that has been formed, after speaking of the inferiority of his critical and classical attainments, which certainly bore no proportion to his eminence as a preacher adds, "Do not suppose that I am endeavoring to depreciate him by these remarks. I am far from doing it; and I think that when you take into view what was his main object, and what were the high views which occupied every power of his soul, they will be found to increase rather than detract from his eminence. It was his glory to be ignorant of other and inferior things, if thereby he was becoming more acquainted with those which made for his peace, and the peace of thousands who were benefited by his early ministry. It will never after this be surmised, that his want of proficiency in what is called learning, was owing to any want of ability to acquire it. It was to be attributed to the same cause which induced him to refuse an exhibition to Glasgow in my hearing—a love of doing good, and a conviction of the shortness of his day. I am far from being one of those unreasonable persons, who when they find a man rising to distinction in one part of his intellectual character, expect that he should be equally prominent in every other."

The justice of these remarks, and the additional light they shed upon the character of Spencer, must be my apology for their introduction here.

No. VIII.

ADDITIONAL LETTERS.

LETTER I.

TO MR. GEORGE MEDLEY.

Dorking, July 21st, 1809.

"VERY DEAR SIR—It has occasioned me no small anxiety, that since I have been at this place, I have heard nothing of you. 'Tis true, indeed, that I engaged to write to you, but I have been expecting that you would have called here before now, on your way to Brighton.

"I need not tell you, how happy I should be to see you, nor what real pleasure my kind hostess would feel in entertaining you at her house.

"Since I have been at Dorking, my time has been fully occupied by a variety of engagements. Preaching, walking, reading, and society, have all urged their claims upon me, and each received a measure of attention. I have reason to hope, that the Lord of the harvest will bless his word, as he enables me to deliver it to the congregation. The greatest attentions are paid me; nor do I anticipate the day of separation from them with any peculiar sentiments of pleasure. Motives for humility and lowliness of mind continually rush in upon me, and wretched indeed shall I be, if suffered to fall into *pride*—that 'condemnation of the devil.'

"The vicinity of this town is remarkably pleasant: in my walks I am sometimes led to see, how the azure skies, meandering streams, flowery meads,

and rising hills, all show forth the eternal power and Godhead of the Saviour by whom all things were created; and how they all serve, in one way or other, to recommend him, and set forth his unrivalled excellence, while they acknowledge him as their sole proprietor, for '*he is Lord of all.*'

"I hope that you enjoy the blessings of his new creating power, and find that he who first created in you a right spirit, still puts his fear into your heart, as your best defence against every danger, and as your effectual preventive against departing from him.

"In your requests to the God of his saints, 'remember me,' that he may bestow upon me such blessings as shall render me a lively Christian, a faithful friend, and a useful minister: nor would I, when I bow my knees before our Father who is in heaven forget to pray for you, to whom I am so much indebted, and who may well consider me as

"Yours, most affectionately,

"THOMAS SPENCER."

LETTER II.

TO THE SAME.

Liverpool, July 12th, 1810.

"MY DEAR FRIEND—I am sure you will be glad to hear from me, and therefore make no *scruple* of *troubling* you with a line. In this distant part of the kingdom, it affords me great pleasure to recollect that I have, though far away, excellent friends who sincerely regard me, and anxiously watch over my best interests—and, I am happy to say, you are among the first of my constant cordial Christian friends. Oh! that both of us may enjoy the sweet friendship of him who having 'loved his own which were in the world, loved them to the end.'

"I suppose you know, that an unexpected scene of affliction was opened to me before I left town, and it still sends forth bitter waters. 'Tis hard to see and to acknowledge that, whilst clouds and darkness are around him, righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his seat. We, alas! are too apt to murmur at the holy providence of that God, who does as he pleases in heaven and in earth, and who will hereafter make us know that he does all things well.

"Pray for me, that I may be enabled to say, 'I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that in faithfulness thou hast afflicted me.' My journey to this place was most tiresome and fatiguing. I am treated with every possible mark of attention. My preaching is well attended; may it be crowned with the real blessing of our God. To such a request I know your piety will lead you to add *Amen.* I may possibly remain here *four* more Sabbaths: I wish however to stay but *three.*

"———At first I found it disagreeable to have no old friends to converse with at this place; but such separations are necessary, and if sanctified, have a tendency to drive us nearer to the Saviour, the only source of permanent happiness. At his throne we may always unbosom ourselves; and when consolation does not come from our fellow creatures, we must look for it from him, 'who is a present help in time of trouble.' How sweet is the thought, that his ear is ever open to our requests, wherever we may be, and that he can always supply our wants. Farewell, my dear friend; may you enjoy the choicest blessings a covenant God can give. Your affectionate friend,

"THOMAS SPENCER."

LETTER III.

TO MR. N. H———.

"MY DEAR SIR—I have thankfully to acknowledge the receipt of your kind letter. I am grieved to hear that sickness has entered your habitation, and sorrow oppressed the heart of your valuable partner. Oh! may you find, that Jehovah mingles mercy with judgment, and that he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men. Pray earnestly, my dear sir, for a spirit of resignation to the will of God, and confidence in the disposal of him who must do right. 'What I do,' says our best friend, 'thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.' Oh! for faith in his wisdom and his care. I am ill qualified to suggest much that will be of use to you in your present trial; and I hope you have proved before now the sympathy of the Saviour, who feels with his people in all their sorrows, and whose strong arm can support them in every trial; thus your experience will lead you afresh to apply to him now, and repose your confidence in him for ever.

"Take care that you mention to Mrs. H. the stability of the covenant of grace, which remains still rich in its treasures, and secure in its blessings, though our comforts fail us, and our hope decays. Tell her that Christ lives still, and that he lives for her as a believer in him, and that no affliction can separate from his love. Tell her that in all these dispensations, he has kind ends to answer, which if we do not discover on this side eternity, we shall know well and gratefully acknowledge when we enter that holy, that large family above, where neither disease nor death ever approach. I earnestly desire, I would frequently pray, that she may have grace to commit the child into the hands of Christ, who once said, of such is the kingdom of heaven; and should it be his holy will to remove this darling of your heart to his own arms in glory, may she and you, still taught by divine grace, and supported by divine love, say—I was dumb, and opened not my mouth, because thou didst it. God can teach us to adore and bless, even for dispensations which we cannot understand.

"My own mind is now often painfully exercised by the idea of leaving the society of those who have possessed a large share of my heart, for a place so distant as Liverpool. On this subject, I have felt more than I can possibly express. Pray for me, that I may be enabled to commit myself, and those I love, unto the kind care of our Father in heaven.

"For the present farewell: present my respects to our friends, and believe me sincerely yours,

"THOMAS SPENCER."

LETTER IV.

TO MR. GEORGE MEDLEY.

Liverpool, May 12th, 1811.

"MY VERY DEAR FRIEND—I hope you will not mistake *that* remissness in writing I have to confess to you, for neglect, as it arises from the number and pressing nature of my daily important engagements—and you know I have to undertake all these with a mind always tortured with anxiety, and exercised with the severe strokes of our Father's chastening rod. Long and distressing is the illness of both my beloved friends at Brighton. The event is with God, and I know that he will so manage it, as to advance his own glory, though perhaps not what I should consider my interest. You too, my dear friend, have shared a measure of affliction, from the disposals of divine providence: I have no doubt but you have felt, and felt keenly too, but you *can* 'hope in God, for you shall yet praise him, who is the health of your countenance and your God.' His grace shall be sufficient for you, his arm shall sustain both you and yours, and in your cares he will ever feel the liveliest interest. Oh! then cast, my valued friend, cast all your cares upon him, for he careth for you. I often delight my mind with reflecting on the various pleasures we enjoyed toge-

'her in what the world would call *better days;* but we, who look upward more than the men of the world do, would call no days or seasons *ill* or *unfortunate*, because to us there is a promise made, which says, 'As thy day is so shall thy strength be.' Frequently however do I, with affectionate remembrance of yourself, review the different, the interesting journies we have taken together—now separated by the hand of providence, we serve the same beloved Lord, we press to the same holy and happy state. May grace preserve us all the days of our pilgrimage on earth, and land us safe in heaven.

"I think that till very lately I never properly considered the uncertainty of human life, or the vanity of the world. God has however caused me to hear impressive lectures on these subjects, in such a way, as secured my deepest attention, and reached my inmost soul. Oh! that I may learn obedience by the things which I suffer.

"I hope I am blessed from above in my ministerial work; may the Eternal Spirit sanction and succeed my labors! I hope to be ordained the second week in June. Rev. Ebenezer White, of Chester, has recently joined the spirits of just men made perfect. I am going to his funeral. Farewell; may you keep close to God, and then I know you will be happy.

"I am, yours affectionately,

"THOMAS SPENCER."

A POEM

ON THE DEATH OF THE REV. THOMAS SPENCER, OF LIVERPOOL, WHO WAS DROWNED IN BATHING IN THE TIDE, AUGUST 5, 1811.

BY JAMES MONTGOMERY.

Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters; and thy footsteps are not known."—PSALM LXXVII. V. 19.

I WILL not sing a mortal's praise;
To Thee I consecrate the lays,
To whom my pow'rs belong;
These gifts, upon thine altar strown,
O God! accept; accept thine own!
My gifts are thine; be thine alone
The glory of my song.

In earth and ocean, sky and air,
All that is excellent and fair,
Seen, felt, or understood,
From one eternal cause descends,
To one eternal centre tends,
With God begins, continues, ends,
The source and stream of good.

I worship not the sun at noon,
The wand'ring stars, the changing moon,
The wind, the flood, the flame;
I will not bow the votive knee
To wisdom, virtue, liberty;
"There is no God but God" for me,
Jehovah is his name.

Him through all nature I explore;
Him in his creatures I adore,
Around, beneath, above;
But clearest in the human mind,
His bright resemblance when I find,
Grandeur with purity combin'd,
I most admire and love.

O there was ONE, on earth awhile
He dwelt; but transient as a smile
That turns into a tear;
His beautous image pass'd us by;
He came like lightning from the sky,
He seem'd as dazzling to the eye,
As prompt to disappear.

Sweet in his undissembling mien
Were genius, candor, meekness, seen,
The lips that lov'd the truth;
The single eye, whose glance sublime
Look'd to eternity through time;
The soul, whose thoughts were wont to climb
Above the hopes of youth.

Of old,* before the lamp grew dark,
Reposing near the sacred Ark,
The child of Hannah's pray'r
Heard, midst the temple's silent round,
A living voice; nor knew the sound
That thrice alarm'd him ere he found
The Lord, who chose him, there.

Thus early call'd, and strongly mov'd
A prophet from a child approv'd,
SPENCER his course began;
From strength to strength, from grace to grace,
Swiftest and foremost in the race,
He carried vict'ry in his face,
He triumph'd while he ran.

How short his day!—the glorious prize,
To our slow hearts and failing eyes,
Appear'd too quickly won:
The warrior rush'd into the field,
With arm invincible to wield
The spirit's sword, the spirit's shield,
When lo! the fight was done.

The loveliest star of evening's train
Sets early in the western main,
And leaves the world in night;
The brightest star of morning's host,
Scarce ris'n, in brighter beams is lost.
Thus sunk his form on ocean's coast,
Thus sprang his soul to light.

Who shall forbid the eye to weep
That saw him, from the ravening deep,
Pluck'd like the lion's prey?
For ever bow'd his honor'd head,
The spirit in a moment fled,
The heart of friendship cold and dead,
The limbs a wreath of clay.

Revolving his mysterious lot,
I mourn him, but I praise him not;
To God the praise be giv'n,
Who sent him—like the radiant bow,
His covenant of peace to show,
Athwart the passing storm to glow,
Then vanish into heav'n.

O CHURCH! to whom the youth was dear,
The angel of thy mercies near,
Behold the path he trod;
A "milky way" through midnight skies!
Behold the grave in which he lies;
E'en from the dust the prophet cries,
"Prepare to meet thy God."

REFLECTIONS ON MORTALITY.

BY CHARLES BUCK.

"*The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field. The grass withereth; the flower fadeth, because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: surely the people are grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; but the word of our God shall stand for ever.*"—ISAIAH XL. 6, 7, 8.

IT is computed that near thirty millions of the human race die every year! What an awful reflec-

* 1 Samuel, i. 3.

tion is this! How great the multitude that are constantly dropping into eternity! and how numerous the paths that lead to the grave! Life, too, is but a short journey, and we soon arrive at the house appointed for all living. We may rather be said to die daily, than to live. We have not only the spoils of death around us, but the seeds of death within us. We do not all however, descend to the tomb in the same way. Some few are spared to the age of man, and then pass silently away. Others are cut off in the bloom of life, and in the midst of active and useful exertions. Some linger for awhile under painful disease—they see their grave ready before they lie down in it. Others, wearied with life, and impatient under its ills, throw themselves into the arms of death: "they either shake their glass to make it run faster, or break it at once by violence." And some who bid fair to stand for a season, are unexpectedly called away by some mysterious dispensation of divine providence. Thus it was with our departed young friend. The public eye was upon him, and much was anticipated from his talents and zeal in the great work in which he was engaged; but infinite Wisdom has seen fit to remove him to another world. Well! what shall we say? "Clouds and darkness are round about the Most High; but righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne."*

The words we have chosen are not to be considered only in relation to the opposers of God's ancient people, at the time of their deliverance from captivity, but are applicable to the whole human race. "The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? *All* flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field." The mortality of man then is a subject with which we ought to be deeply affected. It is, indeed, that which makes but a faint impression on the mind; for though the living know that they must die, yet there is a most strange insensibility as to this awful event. We can hear of it without concern, and talk of it without feeling; when it comes nearer to us than usual, we seem awake for a moment, just drop a tear or two over our departed enjoyments, converse a little on the uncertainty of life, and then fall asleep again and dream away our existence; till at last, we are awakened by this very enemy, whose approach we have all along studied to forget, and which most of us, indeed, are ill prepared to meet! But how unwise is this, thus, to impose upon ourselves! Can any thing be more irrational? "O that we were but wise—that we did but consider our latter end!"†

In attending to these words, let us observe the state of man as here represented, and endeavor to derive from them some important and useful lessons.

I. *Observe the Description.—Man is flesh!* It is true he possesses an immaterial, immortal principle; but his animal frame is frail and perishing. He is not composed of gold nor silver, marble nor iron, wood nor stone, nor any of the durable materials around him. Almost every object he sees or handles is less perishable than himself. There is nothing substantial in his nature. He is affected by almost every thing that touches him. An insect can contend with him; a worm can undermine him; a little air can stifle him; a few drops of water can drown him; a moth can crush him. The Almighty need not throw a mountain on him to destroy him; he need not call for a torrent to inundate him; he need not open a volcano to swallow him.—No: Weakness and death are in his very frame. It is but an earthly house; a temporary building; the various parts of which are kept together with labor and difficulty. The body must be daily fed, or it languishes: it must be clothed, or it is benumbed with cold; it must lie down for rest, or it will fall of itself: it must be perpetually exercised, or it will become the habitation of disease: it must be treated with attention and watched over with care, or it will be rendered unfit for the functions of life. How many wheels are there in perpetual motion! the friction of which, if driven too fast, will set fire to the whole machine; or, if impeded or clogged, will stop the whole course. The apostle Paul, calls it a vile body;* not indeed in respect to God's workmanship; but as it is flesh, formed of the dust of the ground, the habitation of many evil propensities, too often a hinderance to devotion, and must at last become noisome, and be cast into the grave. Here, too, we are all on a level. What is that mighty conqueror, celebrated for his military glory and applauded for his noble achievements in the field of battle?—It is but flesh. What is that illustrious monarch, sitting on a splendid throne, and clothed in all the robes of majesty? It is but flesh. What is that profound philosopher, diving into the depths of science, or soaring above the intellects of his fellows. It is but flesh. What is that persuasive orator, that so impresses with his eloquence, that charms and effects the passions of human mind? It is but flesh. What is that fine form and beautiful countenance, that attracts the attention and fascinates the senses? It is but flesh. "Death (says one) will alike condemn their eyes to impenetrable night; their tongue to eternal silence; their whole system to the grave. I see a superb monument; I approach this striking object. I see magnificent inscriptions: I read the pompous titles of general, prince, monarch; but I long to see the inside of this elegant piece of workmanship; and I peep under the stone that covers him, to whom all this pomp is consecrated. There I find—what? A putrid carcass, devoured by worms! O vanity of human grandeur! Vanity of vanities: all is vanity!"† Now, is this the case? Then why should we think so much of our bodies? why should all our happiness be placed in the gratification of our senses? Why should we spend so much time and money in adorning that which must soon decay?—Especially aged people; how painful is it to see them so fond of useless decorations! The day is nearly closed: the evening is advancing; and yet they want to go down to the grave covered with finery. Their strength, perhaps, is gone; their frame has the marks of death upon it. It is but a skeleton; and yet they want to cover it with ornaments. What an affecting sight, to see old age and new fashions meeting together! How much happier they whose adorning is not "the outward adorning of plaiting the hair, of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel, but is that of the hidden man of the heart, which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price."‡ Seek then this grace. Let not the body be adorned at the expense of the soul. Remember, "to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Put ye on, therefore, the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof."‖

II. *Observe the Comparison.*—"All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field." Human nature in its lowest state is but grass, and in its highest, but a flower. "The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.§ He is then of earthly extraction. Though God was his maker, yet he was not constituted pure intelligence. "The first man, says the apostle, was

* Psalm xcvii. 1, 2. † Deut. xxxii. 29.

* Phil. iii. 21. † Saurin.
‡ Pet. iii. 3, 4, ‖ Rom. viii. 6. xiii. 14
§ Gen. ii. 7.

of the earth, earthy."* Like grass, how easily endangered, how soon cut down. How exposed to the winds and storms of adversity. Nor can he screen himself from these. They pass over the field of life, and often prove destructive in their career. The diseases to which we are liable are numerous, and the casualties we are subject to, are not a few. Ten thousand things lie in ambush to push us to the grave. And even events trifling in themselves have proved destructive. "We read of some, that a fly or a grape stone have dispatched them; some that have died by plucking an hair from their breasts; the Almighty thus turning a very hair into a spear to destroy them. If we consider the vicissitude of natural things, we shall find that death reigns in them all. The day dies into night, summer into winter; time itself, that destroys all things, yet dies continually; nor can it exist two minutes together. Our very life is nothing but a succession of dying; every day, and every hour wears away part of it, and so far as it is already spent, so far are we already dead and buried: so that the longest liver has no more, but, that he is longer a dying than others."† But, another figure is here used by the Prophet: "all the goodliness thereof, is as the flower of the field." Not as the flower of the garden; where it is cultivated and protected; but of the field, where every hand is ready to gather it, or any foot may tread it down. The flower is noted for three qualities: sweetness, that affects the smell; beauty, that affects the eye; softness, that affects the touch. The metaphor, therefore, is here employed to represent man at his best estate. But as the most beautiful flower soon loses these qualities, so it is said, "the days of man are as grass; as a flower of the field so he flourisheth; the wind passeth over it, and it is gone, and the place thereof knoweth it no more. In the morning, it flourisheth and groweth up; in the evening, it is cut down and withereth."‡ Have you not, reader, known this in your own circle? You have been favored with earthly comforts; you have often looked upon them with peculiar pleasure; you have taken more than usual care with those flowers which have appeared tender and beautiful in your own eyes; you have transplanted them, as you thought to a more genial soil; you have said, well, these are delightful objects—these are sources of the greatest pleasure—truly, I am happy in their possession—these shall be my support and comfort in times yet to come. O, how have you gone and watered these flowers; how have you hedged them round; how have you endeavored to protect them when you saw the storm advancing; but ah! after all, you could not preserve them: you have had the pain to see the leaf fade, the beauty decline, the energy fail, and presently the whole fall. What! said you, *Can it be?* Is this my child; is this my friend; is this the object I so much admired? Father of mercies! why this? why didst thou not smite yonder weed? why didst thou not let thy hand fall on the unsightly plant, rather than on this choice flower? Thus, however, Providence is pleased to work; and herein it becomes us to learn the vanity of depending on any human excellency. Neither the goodliness of the flower, the care of its owner, nor the felicity of its situation, can preserve it alive. Beware, then, of idolizing the creature. Turn your attention to a superior object: anticipate the joys of another world—there, no worm is at the root; there, the goodliness shall never fade.

III. *Mark the Universality of Man's Mortality.*—Not a few, but *all* flesh is grass. "As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. It is appointed unto men once to die, and after that the judgment. There is no man that hath power over the Spirit to retain the Spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death."* Ever since the entrance of sin, death has been making the most awful ravages. "One generation passeth away, and another cometh; but the earth abideth for ever."† "The world," says one, "is like a great fair, where some are coming in—others going out, while the assembly that is in it is confused, and the most part know not wherefore they are come together."‡ Whether men however be wise or ignorant, idle or active, rich or poor, young or old, death is common to all. It is not to be bribed by riches, impeded by power, conquered by strength, nor stayed by entreaties. All ranks fall before this destroyer. Sometimes it is the harmless infant, who has no sooner entered the vale of tears than it is commanded to depart. Sometimes the youth, whose powers just began to open, and whose appearance was the most promising, is unexpectedly removed. Sometimes the middle aged, in the midst of business, and apparently in health, are pierced by a sudden arrow from the bow of death. Nor are the rich and the great exempt. They too, must die, like others. There is no royal path to the grave. There is not one kind of death for the monarch, and another for the peasant. The crown cannot prolong life, nor the sceptre sway the last enemy, death. Here, too, the wise philosopher, as well as the ignorant barbarian, must fall. The finest understanding must be darkened; the strongest powers fail; and the most brilliant imagination be clouded. Nor shall the mighty conquerors of nations escape. Where are our Alexanders, and our Cesars, who have struck terror through the whole world? And, whither are those tending, who yet disturb mankind with the noise of the chariots of war, the clash of arms, and the groans of the dying? Soon they must surrender to the king of terrors, and be numbered among the slain. Neither let the beautiful nor the fair pride themselves in external appearance. They too must lie down in the grave, and their glory fade. The righteous also, however desirable their example, however exalted their piety, must go the way of all the earth. The wicked, too, must depart. However unwilling, they must obey; however unprepared, they must go. Their cries to stay cannot be heard; their hopes of respite will be in vain. The finally impenitent, it is said, do not go down gently into the grave; but they "are driven away in their wickedness: they are driven out of light into darkness, and chased out of the world."‖ But shall not the benevolent, the zealous, the useful be spared? An Enoch and an Elijah, indeed, reached the land of pure delight without passing the dark valley of death; but no promise is given to others of the like privilege. Yes; the most useful must die. These we may consider as the goodliest flowers in the field: as the most valuable of all. But how often are they cut down just as they begin to bud, or suddenly wither as they arrive to their full bloom? What shall we say to the instance before us? Was not here a beautiful flower, with hues painted by the rays of the Sun of Righteousness; and, unfolding its excellencies as the summer advanced, but alas! suddenly swept away, to be seen no more. O God! mysterious is thy providence, but righteous art thou in all thy ways!

Here, then, is the end of all. "The grass *withereth*, and the flower *fadeth*;" but it is added, "because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it." Let us not consider it then as coming by chance. Whatever be the means, the place, or the time, let us re-

* 1 Cor. xv. 47. † Hopkins.
‡ Psalm ciii. 14, 16. xc. 6.

* Rom. v. 12. Heb. ix. 27. † Eccl. i. 4. viii. 8.
‡ Boston. ‖ Job xviii. 18. Prov. xiv. 32.

member, it is the Lord's doing. Besides, it is necessary to die, as well as to live. There is another state of things, as well as the present, and of far more importance. There is a judgment to come; and we must leave this world to appear before that solemn tribunal. There are dark providences which cannot be understood here: we must quit the present scene, that we may be able to bear the explanation. There are riches of glory, which our present capacities cannot contain: we must die before we shall be able to explore them. There are abodes of light, and mansions of absolute purity above; but we must be dissolved, leave our imperfections here, and be endowed with glorious bodies and celestial minds, to be fitted for the enjoyment of them. To the righteous then, death is a friend. If the flower drop, it is that it may be removed from the desert, to bloom for ever in the light and glory of the paradise of God.

As it respects human life, the repetition used in the text should teach us the earnestness with which the frailty of man should be stated, and the necessity there is of endeavoring to impress the subject on our own hearts. It is not said that the grass *will* fade, but that it *now* does. We shall not only go, but we are all *now* going to one place. "Our life is a candle, either blown out by the wind, or soon burns out of itself." Death comes indeed very sudden to some. Some go cheerfully to rest in the evening, but are consumed before the morning light. Some venture into the river, without suspecting danger; but the waves cover them, and they are seen no more. Others set out on a journey, for business or pleasure, but are thrown out of the vehicle, and carried back dead. Others, while conversing with a friend, in a moment are seized with pain, heave a sigh, and fall lifeless to the ground. "It is a strange folly then, that we, who are subject to such casualties, should yet dream of dying no other way than by old age. Did we but seriously consider, by what small pins the frame of man is held together, it would appear no less a miracle to us, that we live to the end of one day, or one hour."*

But while the best and most serious must confess their insensibility to danger, how should we pity the wicked! Sudden death to a good man is sudden glory; but the wicked are neither happy in the thought of death, nor at all prepared for it. They have their portion in this life. The beauties of virtue, the excellencies of godliness, the glories of heaven have no charms for them. They prefer the indulgence of their appetites, the pleasures of the world, and the gratification of their passions to all the satisfaction which a good hope, a pure conscience, or right principles can afford. How dreadful must the prospect of death be to such men! The very thought of leaving this world must fill them with horror. Hence, when one flattered another in the midst of his enjoyments, and asked him, What he wanted more? he said "*Continuance.*" But this is the very thing that cannot be granted. To how many does God say, "This night thy soul shall be required of thee?" O miserable man, then, who builds his happiness on what he cannot retain; who thinks about every thing but the right object; who is always busy in gazing upon the baubles of sense, and despises the pearl of great price; who is assiduously gathering imaginary treasures, which at last will be of no more avail than pebbles or straws, while he neglects the one thing needful! May such remember, before it be too late, that without repentance of their sin and faith in the Saviour, they cannot meet death with joy, nor ever be permitted to enter into the kingdom of heaven.

* Hopkins.

Having now offered a few Reflections on Mortality let us observe,

IV. *The consolation afforded us under these affecting views.*

"The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the word of our God shall stand for ever." And Peter adds, "and this is the word which by the Gospel is preached unto you."* Let us not say then, that our condition is deplorable. He who is infinitely wise and holy, is also merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth. "As a father pitieth his children, so he pitieth us."† He has written to us the great things of his law; he has favored us with the revelation of his will. Beholding us as rational, yet sinful and dying creatures, he hath made known to us a system every way adapted to renovate our natures, illuminate our minds, relieve our miseries, and conduct us safe to a happier world. "In this was manifested the love of God towards us because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."‡ Here, then, amidst all the changes of time, and the awful ravages of death, we find a firm basis on which to build. Here we can behold God as our father, Christ as our mediator, and the divine Spirit as our comforter and guide. Here it is that we hear a voice, saying, "Son, daughter, be of good cheer, all thy sins are forgiven thee." Our attention is turned off from every thing here to centre alone in the chief good. Here we can approach the Almighty without trembling; and, without presumption, humbly hope for his benediction. Under the cross, we can dwell without fear, and with wonder and delight behold our guilt rolled away for ever. Clothed with the righteousness of our Redeemer, and participating the influences of his grace, we can rejoice with a joy unspeakable and full of glory. Yes, this, and this only is the support of man under all the evils of life. This affords tranquillity within, while the tempest rages without. Welcome, then, all ye scenes of sorrow and trouble! Welcome, all ye vicissitudes of life, and harbingers of death! Yea, welcome death itself, and an eternal world! These shall not affright the renewed soul; these shall not damp the happiness of him who looks above, and aspires to glory and immortality. O how delightful, how suitable is the gospel of Christ! What affliction does not this sweeten; what loss does not this repair; what condition does not this make easy! What gloom does not this dispel! "Blessed are they that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance; in thy name shall they rejoice all the day, and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted."‖

But let us observe here the striking contrast between this delightful system and all other things. The one is said to *fade*, but the other shall *stand for ever*. We have already seen that every thing of a sublunary nature tends to decay: however excellent it may appear to our view: however valuable it may be considered in itself; or however desirous we may be of retaining it—it is of no consequence; mutability and dissolution are written upon all. But here is the Plant of Renoun, that bears twelve manner of fruits; and which shall never cease to yield in the paradise above. For ages already hath the gospel shed its influence among the sons of men. The powers of darkness, indeed, have done all they could to destroy the leaves which are for the healing of the nations. The tree of life has been surrounded with enemies. There, the savage

* 1 Pet. i. 25. † Psalm ciii. 15.
‡ 1 John iv. 9, 10. ‖ Psalm lxxxix. 15, 16.

barbarian, the refined philosopher, the malignant demon, the proud pharisee, the boasting infidel, and the wretched profligate, have all assembled for the purpose of its destruction. But how vain! Who can extinguish the sun? who can blot out a world? who can cause the heavens to depart as a scroll? who can grasp the ocean in his hand! As well might feeble mortals attempt to do this, as endeavor to injure that which is more dear to God, than all the material systems ever created by his all-powerful hand. "It endureth for ever." Yes; it shall still continue to make progress. What! though enemies oppose, ignorance and infidelity strive, and the powers of the world unite against it. What though the means may seem sometimes to be useless, and the faithful, promising servants of God be removed—yet it must prevail. All the laws of nature must be reverted; the sun, turned into darkness; the moon, into blood; and the stars drop from their spheres, sooner than the purposes of Jehovah shall be disannulled. The gospel must live, and finally triumph. All mankind of every age and nation, shall be raised, and assembled to attend the funeral of the world; but none shall ever be called to witness the extirpation of the gospel. It is, therefore, justly designated *everlasting;* for it shall endure to the end of time, become victorious over all nations, and its happy effects felt for ever in a better world.

You, Christian, must shortly feel the stroke of mortality. Heart and flesh must fail; but in that solemn moment you will find, more than ever, the suitability of this divine scheme. When not a single creature in the world can be of any service to you, this shall not leave you comfortless, but remain your support to the last. Then, when closing your eyes on all earthly scenes; when leaving your dearest relatives and friends; when the cold hand of the last enemy is upon you, you shall sing, "O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory? Thanks be unto God, who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ."*

V. Lastly. *Observe, that both Man's Mortality and the Divine Clemency are to be proclaimed; for the voice said, Cry.*

The ministers of the sanctuary are not to dwell in solitude; they are not to live perpetually in the study, nor spend their time in silent meditation. They must come forth; they must cry aloud, and spare not; they must lift up their voice, to warn men of their danger, and to point them to the place of refuge. "I have set watchmen on thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace, day nor night: ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silent."† Such is the divine command. Nor let it be considered as a small privilege, to be reminded of our real condition, and to be favored with the tidings of mercy. "But how shall men call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? As it is written how beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!"‡

The ministration of the gospel is therefore of the greatest importance. It is for this purpose the Almighty is pleased to raise up and qualify his servants, that they may be faithful monitors to the sons of men. Earnestly, zealously, constantly must they declare the truth. They must be "instant in season; out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine."‖

Various may be the talents of the ambassadors of Christ, but their great object must be the same. When this is kept in view, we may expect the Divine blessing will render them successful; for he has said, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."* Let us here recollect, however, that though the Almighty is pleased to honor men and not angels as the instruments of preaching the gospel, yet they are but earthen vessels; they are flesh and cannot abide for ever. Sometimes they are taken away at the very time when they appear to be the most promising and the most useful. Thus has divine Providence been pleased to remove our dear young friend, of whom we shall now proceed to give some account.

Mr. Thomas Spencer was born at Hertford, and received his religious impressions very early in life. Having a great desire to engage in the work of the ministry, he was placed under the care of the Rev. W. Hordle, of Harwich. Here he stayed for twelve months, and displayed evident marks of considerable talent and piety. Before the age of sixteen, he was admitted into Hoxton academy.† Here, on account of his youth, it was thought proper that he should appear in public as little as possible at first. Supplies however being wanted, Mr. S. was sent occasionally to preach. His popularity soon began to appear, and the requests for Mr. Spencer's labors were so numerous, that it was with difficulty that they could be granted. The sweetness of his tone, the evangelical strain of his discourse, his accurate and appropriate quotations from Scripture, his peculiar energy, his youthful appearance, his admirable gift of prayer, all tended to render him popular. Having completed his studies at Hoxton, many destitute congregations were looking with wishful eye towards him, nor was there a little exertion among them who should succeed in obtaining him. As his talents however were acceptable, it was thought that a large sphere of usefulness would be desirable. Accordingly he accepted a call to Liverpool, and commenced his stated ministry on the first Sabbath in February last.‡ Here attracting vast multitudes of people, a larger place was thought necessary. On the 17th of April, he laid the foundation-stone of a new chapel, to be ninety-six feet in length, and sixty-six feet in breadth. On this occasion he wrote to a friend in London as follows: "Yesterday I laid the foundation-stone of my new chapel; gave an address on the spot; and dedicated the place to God in solemn prayer. The auditory consisted of not less than five thousand people, who were all fixed in their attention. May I on that ground often find a solace for my care in the public worship of God! May he bless the undertaking! May his eyes and his heart be there perpetually!"

Truly how mysterious are the ways of Providence. His time on earth was indeed to be short. On the Sabbath preceding his death he preached in the morning from those words, Jeremiah xxxi. 3: "I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore, with loving kindness have I drawn thee." He afterwards administered the Lord's Supper, in a manner remarkably edifying and impressive. In the evening, he took for his text the words of our Lord, as recorded in Luke x. 42. "But one thing is needful, and Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her."

On Monday morning, "It appears that Mr.

* 1 Cor. xv. 55. † Isa. lxii. 6.
‡ Rom. x. 14, 15. ‖ 2 Tim. iv. 2.

* Matt. xxviii. 20.

† For a copy of his religious experience, which was read to the committee previous to his admission, see Memoirs, page 213, 214.

‡ Before he left the Academy he delivered a parting address, in the presence of his fellow students. See Appendix, No. IV.

Spencer left his residence in the Park, in good health, about 11 o'clock in the forenoon (August 5) and walked down to the beach, where he met with a gentleman of the name of Brookfield, who had been bathing, and was then dressing, with whom he entered into conversation, and asked if the place was a good one for bathing. On being answered in the affirmative, Mr. S. began to undress. When he walked into the water he was met by a person of the name of Potter, one of the workmen of the Herculaneum pottery, who directed him in what manner he should come into the water, but had no knowledge of him. Mr. Spencer observed it was very cold; when Potter said, he would feel warmer when he had been in awhile. When Mr. Spencer was about breast-high, he plunged over head, and then made an attempt to swim in a parallel line with the shore; and after he had gone about two yards in this direction, he recovered his feet, and again said, "Oh! it is very cold!" Soon after this by the strength of an eddy current, produced by a projecting rock, he was swept out of his depth. Potter himself, who is an expert swimmer, found himself floating in the same direction, and with some difficulty recovered the shore, when he looked about for Mr. Spencer, and saw the top of his head floating above the surface of the water. Potter knew not whether he was amusing himself, or drowning. He however, cried out to him, but receiving no answer, immediately plunged in again, and swam to the rock to render him assistance, which he found impossible, Mr. Spencer having then sunk in seven feet water; and Potter with some trouble got up the side of the rock, and communicated the intelligence to Mr. Smith, the resident agent of the potteries, who immediately ordered out two boats which were directly manned and brought to the spot, where every exertion was used by Potter, as well as by those in the boats, to find the body. At length they succeeded in drawing it up, after it had been in the water about fifty minutes. It was instantly conveyed to the shore, where, by the judicious arrangements of Mr. Smith, there were several physicians and surgeons in attendance, who used every possible method that could be devised to restore animation, but without effect."*

Such was the melancholy end of this excellent young minister at the age of twenty years and a half. Lovely youth! little didst thou think, the day before, when expatiating on the glories of heaven, that thou shouldst so soon be there! Little didst thou think, that thine immortal spirit should take its flight from the briny deep to the celestial world! Little didst thou think, that, in a few days, the dear object of thy affections should have to weep, in the anguish of her soul, in hearing the melancholy tidings of thy death! Ah! and little did we imagine, that on thy tomb this inscription should be written —"Here are the remains of one who bid fair to be eminent and useful in the church, but who was suddenly swallowed up by the mighty waves!" Well, "it is the Lord; let him do what seemeth him good. He gave, and he hath taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord."†

Learn here the sovereignty of God. Here was a young man highly esteemed. "Of manners most amiable, conciliating, and engaging. As a preacher, his talents were held in a degree of estimation, and possessed an extent of influence, which have seldom been equalled in the annals of pulpit eloquence. Perhaps it scarcely ever before fell to the lot of any individual, at so early an age, to have diffused religious impression through so extensive a circle of hearers." He was just about to enter the connubial state with an amiable young lady of pious and respectable connections. The church was looking forward with delightful prospects of his success; and thousands were ready to say, "This is the man whom God delighteth to honor. But ah! God's thoughts are not as our thoughts; nor his ways, as our ways. Behold, he taketh away; who can hinder him? who will say unto him, 'What doest thou?'"

2. Learn God's power and independency. He can carry on his cause without us. Paul is no more; Wickliffe is no more; Luther is no more;—but his gospel survives! His cause flourishes! The patriarchs, the prophets, the apostles, the reformers —where are they? they have finished their work, and are gone to rest. But the truth died not with them; the glory is not departed. Other instruments have succeeded. The ark is not lost; the word of the Lord has free course, and will finally triumph over all. Let us not, then, despair. He who raised up our young friend, and made him useful for a season, can easily supply his place. Besides, he is taken away from the evil to come. Popularity might have become a snare, or some evil might have befallen him. Let us be satisfied that he has done his work, though at an early period. Infinite Wisdom saw fit to transplant this flower to a happier soil; and, who can tell? his very death may prove the conversion of many! We must submit. He doth all things well.

3. Learn the uncertainty of every thing here. Ah! little did his mother think, when he hung upon her breast, or when she dandled him on her knee, that this would be his melancholy end. And how little do we know of futurity? Let us not then "boast of to-morrow, for we cannot tell what a day may bring forth."* Let us ask, if death should suddenly meet *us*, are we ready to die? Do we know that it is dangerous to procrastinate? Do we consider "that there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge in the grave, whither we are going."†

O let us seek the favor of him, then, who alone can forgive our sins, and whose Spirit can prepare us for the world above: then, should our departure be sudden, it will all be well; we shall have an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Let us anticipate a better world; let us rejoice in the hope of glory! Yes, Spencer! we hope to see thee again, and thy spiritual children too, whom God hath graciously given thee. There we hope to join thee in celebrating the praises of the Most High; there, beyond the reach of danger, we shall mingle our joys for ever; there we shall go no more out; there, the waves of trouble shall never beat upon us again, for there, it is said, "shall be no more sea."‡

* Liverpool paper.

† "On Tuesday, August the 13th, amidst an immense concourse of people, the remains of Mr. Spencer were conveyed from the Park to Newington chapel for interment." See Memoirs page 248, &c.

* Eccl. ix 10. † Prov. xxvii. 1. ‡ Rev. xxi. 1

THE END.

THE LIFE

OF

PHILIP MELANCTHON,

COMPRISING

AN ACCOUNT OF THE MOST IMPORTANT TRANSACTIONS OF

THE REFORMATION.

BY FRANCIS AUGUSTUS COX, D. D.

"IN NECESSARIIS UNITAS—IN DUBIIS LIBERTAS—IN OMNIBUS CARITAS."

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PREFACE.

Nothing is more gratifying than to invite others to participate our honorable pleasures, especially those of a mental and moral description. The lives of great and good men if related with impartiality, cannot fail of being at once entertaining and instructive. Invited to watch their progress and observe their character, we may learn the most valuable lessons. We are allowed to detect, in order to shun, their errors; to trace, in order to imitate their virtues;—to follow them into their retirements;—to become their associates and friends. From the forum of public debate and of unremitted exertion, we accompany them to the fire-side, and the closet. Divested of the insignia of office, the pomp of authority and the glory of popular applause, we see them in the undress of friendship and private life. We sit with them in the domestic circle, and hear them converse and see them act at home. Human nature is developed;—we gain comprehensive views of men and things.

Every reader must be aware that it is not an *obscure* or *insignificant character* which claims his attention in the following pages. As the intimate friend and distinguished coadjutor of Martin Luther, his name is already familiar and must be dear to every enlightened Protestant; for who can be uninterested in the lives of those illustrious heroes who first led on to the great conflict, in which the liberties of mankind, the rights of conscience, the independence of nations were contested, and by whose struggles they were secured?

In detailing the life of the celebrated Melancthon, I am deeply conscious of one disadvantage. Thoroughly to understand a character and to render the narrative of his life complete, who does not perceive the importance of personal knowledge? It is true, indeed, the coloring may be a little too high and glowing, yet the picture is almost sure to be truer to nature when the artist has drawn from life. It is likely to possess a certain character and expression which a mere copy will seldom exhibit. The *tout ensemble* will be far better preserved. But in the present case, the picture cannot be taken from life; the great original *cannot* sit to the artist! Though necessitated however to be in some degree a copyist, this misfortune is in part remedied by the well-drawn portrait of a very intimate friend and a learned man; the Latin life of Melancthon, by Joachim Camerarius.

I have long cherished a reverence mingled with affection for the interesting subject of these Memoirs. I have been accustomed to trace his exertions as a scholar and a Reformer with admiration. In both respects he was a light in a dark place; and though it is the province of an impartial biographer in furnishing a detailed view of his life and labors in connection with other eminent men of his remarkable age, to notice errors of judgment and imbecilities of mind which are indeed incident to every human character, the reader will be presented with the view of as much excellence, associated with as little defect as is to be expected in the present world. It is sufficient for him to have rescued from the concealment of a dead language the rich materials which he has incorporated into the following pages, and to raise from the long interment of three centuries, the character and the glory of one of the brightest ornaments of religion and literature.

Hackney, 1817.

LIFE OF PHILIP MELANCTHON.

CHAPTER I.

The Reformation—Luther—Birth of Melancthon—His education—Early proficiency—Residence at Pforzheim, Heidelberg and Tubingen—Takes his degree—Obtains an early and remarkable celebrity—Honored by Erasmus and Bishop Latimer—Edits Nauclerus—Renders assistance to Capnio in his contention with the monks—His public lectures and literary zeal—His removal to a Greek Professorship in the University of Wittemberg—Commencement of his friendship with Luther. 1497 to 1518.

THE commencement of the sixteenth century was one of the most momentous periods in the annals of time. It was distinguished by the release of Christianity from those fetters of darkness in which she had been bound for ages, and her triumphant assertion of that glorious liberty in which she now walks abroad through the earth.

This great event cannot be too highly appreciated, especially as we are daily participating the blessings which result from it. But unfortunately, the admiration of mankind is commonly withheld from Christian achievements and lavished upon military heroes. We overlook the misery they inflict, and the wide spreading desolation that marks their course. But were it even possible to separate these images of horror from the consideration of their successes, surely the bloodless victories of truth are nobler in themselves, and accomplished by the exertion of mental and moral energies incalculably more important. On this principle the Reformation from Popery merits particular attention. Whether we consider, on the one hand, the violent and deep-rooted prejudices which were at that period universally prevalent, artfully cherished, and powerfully defended, the great and immediate danger resulting from the slightest attempt at religious innovation, and the deplorable errors which reigned by long usurpation and prescriptive authority over the minds of men;—or, on the other, the seemingly accidental causes from which the Reformation originated, the inconsiderable source from which it flowed, the slow but irresistible progress it made, and the beneficial revolution it effected in the sentiments of mankind, it is impossible not to perceive reasons for astonishment and joy. No one ought to be accused of credulity for calling it a miracle; a moral miracle it undoubtedly was. The miracles which accompanied the first propagation of Christianity and secured its establishment were, it is true, a more direct appeal to the senses, but the same mighty power that established religion in the earth, evidently interposed in this case to rescue it from perishing.

Amongst the instruments of this remarkable change the name of Martin Luther stands pre-eminent. He was not indeed the *first* or the *only* advocate of this righteous cause, but he was in many respects the *greatest*. Others had inveighed against Popery, exposed the errors of that pernicious system with ingenuity and boldness, and even bled for the sacred cause of God and truth. Waldus, Wickliffe, Huss, and Jerome of Prague, are imperishable names; but in vain did they struggle against the torrent of corruption that deluged the earth. They could oppose, in their respective times and stations, but a momentary resistance, and were swept away. Their efforts indeed produced *some* effects, but they were evanescent, for "darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people." Isaiah 60:2. But when Luther appeared, a variety of circumstances co-operated to produce a result which human skill could neither foresee nor prevent. An attentive observer cannot fail to notice the very gradual manner in which truth was discovered to his own mind, by which means he became fitted to act the part he did, when it is probable a more full and sudden manifestation would have disqualified him for the early part of his career as a reformer. For a long time his imperfect knowledge of the great principles of Christianity and the rights of conscience operated as a check upon the impetuous ardor of his spirit, which, though *afterwards* essentially beneficial to the cause, would probably have impeded, if not have wholly prevented the great work of Reformation, had it been *at first* unrestrained by lingering prejudices and superstitions. The schisms which had divided the church about the end of the fourteenth and at the commencement of the fifteenth centuries, materially diminished the popular veneration for the papal dignity. The proceedings of some of the councils in deposing and electing popes at their pleasure produced a similar effect. Above all the scandalous profligacy and venality of the court of Rome, the voluptuous lives of the ecclesiastics, their intolerable exactions, and the facility which the sale of indulgences afforded to the vilest offenders to obtain a ready pardon, prepared the minds of the people in general for those doctrines which the Reformers afterwards promulgated.

Luther possessed a vigorous and fearless mind. He was qualified to take the lead, and to head opposition in a servile age. His mind was incessantly active; his ardor in the pursuit of knowledge and in the propagation of what he knew, inextinguishable. He did not "fight as one that beateth the air,' (1 Cor. 9:26,) in the holy war he undertook. Having buckled on the armor he was impatient for the conflict, and rushed forward to an anticipated victory. He was one of the greatest of Christian heroes, and his faults were those of a first-rate character. Never scarcely did the hand of God form a fitter instrument to do a greater work!

It was, however, happy for Luther that he did not stand alone, but was provided with an associate in his principal labors, adapted in a remarkable degree to supply his deficiencies, to correct his errors, and to regulate his impetuosity of character. Independently of the interest which must necessarily be felt in *any* one who was the intimate friend and coadjutor of Luther, who was with him in all his struggles and helped him through them, MELANCTHON claims a distinguished notice on his own account. In tracing the history of his life, it will be obvious that although inferior in courage he *equalled* Luther in ardent piety, and *excelled* him both in personal virtues and literary attainments.

PHILIP MELANCTHON was born in Saxony, at the small but pleasant town of Bretten, in the lower Palatinate of the Rhine, on the sixteenth day of February, in the year one thousand four hundred and ninety-seven. The following inscription in his father's house records the event:

> DEI PIETATE NATUS EST IN
> HAC DOMO DOCTISSIMUS DN.
> PHILIPPUS MELANCTHON, D.
> XVI. FEBR. A. M.CCCC.XCVII.

The house which belonged to his parents, containing this inscription and his picture, remained standing in the market place till modern times. During the thirty years war many of the literati and inhabitants of Heidelberg took refuge within the walls of Bretten, but in 1632 it was taken by the Imperialists. In the year 1784 it contained, exclusive of the public buildings, two hundred and sixty-two dwelling houses, and upwards of two thousand

inhabitants; but in 1789, it was taken, plundered, and almost exterminated by the French; and what their desolating rapacity spared, was at length destroyed under the orders of the Imperial General Ogilvi, by which act of indiscretion, however, he lost the favor of his master.

The mother of Melancthon was the daughter of John Reuter, a very respectable man, and for many years mayor of the town. Her name was Barbara, and she is represented as a truly estimable woman. His father, George *Schwartzerd*, the German family name, was a native of Heidelberg, but settled at Bretten in consequence of his marriage. He filled the office of engineer or commissary of the artillery, under the Palatinate princes Philip and Rupert. Distinguished not only by integrity, prudence, fidelity, and many other virtues, but by his remarkable ingenuity in the invention of all kinds of instruments, adapted either to the purposes of war, or the fashionable tournaments of the age, he attracted the attention of Maximilian, son of the Emperor Frederic, and became well known to many of the most powerful princes. He died in the year 1508, in consequence of having swallowed some water from a poisoned well about four years before, when engaged in the service of his country. He is described not only as a man of the strictest morals and of undissembled piety, but so grave in his manners, as scarcely to admit even of a joke in the ordinary intercourse of life. His wife continued in a state of widowhood twelve years, when, upon the marriage of her son Philip, which gave her some offence, she again entered into the conjugal state, with a respectable inhabitant of Bretten.

The early studies of Melancthon were chiefly committed to the management of his maternal grandfather Reuter, which is to be attributed to his father's numerous engagements. The choice could not have been better made, for his grandfather was unquestionably well qualified for such an important superintendence, and, at the same time, affectionately solicitous about his youthful charge. It must be understood, that he acted in concert with his mother, and by her advice.

Melancthon was at first placed with his younger brother George, at a public school in his native town; but in consequence of a loathsome disease, at that time prevalent in Germany, having found its way into the school, he was soon removed, and put under private tuition.

Although native genius may have frequently surmounted the greatest disadvantages, it has in too many instances, been injured by an improper or defective education. Like the body that has been cramped in its growth, but which, notwithstanding, evinces its original strength of constitution by the very deformities into which it shoots, so the vigorous mind, checked or misguided at an early period of life, is prone to neglect the useful and pursue the trifling, to cherish unseemly prejudices and to take an erroneous course. Melancthon remarked of Luther, that, "If he had been fortunate enough to have met with suitable teachers, his great capacity would have enabled him to go through all the sciences. Nor is it improbable that the milder studies of a sound philosophy, and a careful habit of elaborate composition, might have been useful in moderating the vehemence of his natural temper." *Op. Pref. Tom. II.*

Considering the age in which he lived, and the state of depression which literature in general suffered, Melancthon seems to have fallen into very good hands; and though his natural capacity was the basis of all his future eminence, much is doubtless to be attributed to the guides of his early studies. His preceptor in the Latin language was John Hungarus; a man of great merit, and, at a very advanced period of life, a faithful preacher of the word of God at Pforzheim. He was charmed with the rapid proficiency of his pupil, who, like other youths of superior talent, was fond of showing his dexterity by discussing with boys much older than himself the rules of grammar, or the elements of language which they had been taught. In these little contests he was usually victorious; but whilst he never failed to impress others with a sense of his superiority, his excellent spirit and temper compelled them to mingle esteem with admiration. At this time he had a stammering, or rather perhaps, a hesitating mode of pronunciation, which, though never very unpleasant, and probably the effect of modest timidity, and not of any natural impediment in the organs of speech, was so effectually cured by time and care, that afterwards it became scarcely, if at all perceptible.

The academy at Pforzheim, under the immediate superintendence of George Simlerus, was highly celebrated. Simlerus was distinguished by his classical learning. He afterwards became a lawyer, of considerable eminence, and a lecturer on jurisprudence at Tubingen. At Pforzheim, Melancthon was introduced to the study of the Greek language, which he prosecuted with great diligence and proportionate success. His brother George and his uncle John were his school-fellows, and they all lodged together at the house of a relation, who was sister to John Reuchlin. This elegant scholar, known to the learned by the name of Capnio, was a native of Pforzheim, and successively a teacher of languages at Basil and at Orleans. His mind naturally vigorous and industriously cultivated, became a storehouse of various erudition. He was the restorer of letters in Germany, and the author of several treatises on philosophy.*

Reuchlin, or Capnio, took particular notice of the three lads who were inmates at his sister's and frequently questioned them about their pursuits at school. The genius of Philip could not remain long undetected by so diligent an inquirer and so zealous a friend to literature. His prompt and accurate replies, indicating the rare combination of a studious habit with an extraordinary talent, instantly won his affections, and led him, in some degree, to prognosticate his future proficiency. To testify his regard and to encourge him in the prosecution of his literary studies, Capnio presented Philip with several books; among the rest, an en-

* It scarcely deserves the name of Philosophy; perhaps it should rather be called *mysticism*, compounded as it was of the Platonic, Pythagorean and Cabalistic doctrines. He wrote treatises entitled, "De Verbo Mirifico," and "De Arte Cabalistica." Some have supposed him to have been the principal author of "Epistolæ Obsculorum Virorum;" a work replete with the most pungent satire against the persecutors of Reuchlin, in the controversy about the restoration of Greek and Hebrew learning. Others have believed the ingenious Ulrich de Hutton, of Franconia, to have been the original writer, but that Reuchlin rendered him essential assistance in the work. In fact, it was the joint production of several literary men, of whom these two were the principal. Hutton was probably the chief writer.

Erasmus allows this performance to be witty, but severely condemns it as anonymous and defamatory, and Leo consigned it to the flames: "But after all," says Jortin, "these *Epistles of the Obscure*, may be considered as a piece of harmless mirth, levelled against men who were not only egregious boobies, but, which was infinitely worse, shameless calumniators and blood-thirsty persecutors." Jortin's *Life of Erasmus*, Vol. I p. 93.

larged Greek Grammar and a Greek and Latin Lexicon. This was a powerful stimulus to his ardent mind, which, dissatisfied with the mere performance of his ordinary exercises, began to indulge itself in poetical composition. Although he possessed sufficient inclination, yet he could not command leisure at any subsequent period of his life to devote himself much to this fascinating art; but he wrote several epigrams, epitaphs, prologues, and, occasionally, poetical epistles to his friends; and some very excellent judges, to whom may be added even the fastidious Julius Cæsar Scaliger, have commended his verses. Probably the efforts of his premature age to which we have adverted, resembled the frequent productions of the same period, by youths of ability at school. He wrote also at the early age of *thirteen*, a humorous piece in the form of a comedy, which he dedicated to Capnio, to testify the sense he entertained of his truly parental kindness, and engaged his school-fellows to perform it in his presence. It was upon this occasion his patron and friend gave him the name of *Melancthon*, a Greek term of similar signification with the German word *Schwartzerd*, (or Black earth.) This method of substituting sonorous Greek appellations for their proper names, was at that period a very common practice amongst the learned. Thus *Reuchlin* from the German word Reuch, *smoak*, was changed by Hormolaus Barbarus into *Capnio*, a term of similar import.

Melancthon appears to have cherished a high regard for his early preceptors, and to have retained it through life. His amiable spirit never undervalued the merit of others, or forgot their claims upon his gratitude. In one of his writings, referring either to Hungarus or Simlerus, he says, "My preceptor was an excellent grammarian, who took pains to make me understand the construction of every sentence, giving me thirty or forty verses at a time to construe. He would not allow me to slur any thing over, and as often as I blundered, he would correct me, but with a proper degree of moderation. Thus I learnt the grammatical part of language. He was one of the best of men. He loved me as a son, and I him as a father; and we shall soon meet, I trust, in eternal life! Yes—I was truly attached to him, although he were somewhat *severe*; yet *severity* I cannot call it, but rather *fatherly correction* to stimulate me to diligence."

After a residence of nearly two years at Pforzheim, Melancthon was sent by his mother and the relation who superintended his education, to the University of Heidelberg: formerly the metropolis, now the second town, of the lower Palatinate, and the birth-place of his father. He was matriculated on the thirteenth of October, in the year 1509, the twelfth of his age. The University was highly celebrated for its various professors in the different branches of learning, who were soon attracted not only by the extraordinary progress and amiable disposition of their young pupil, but by his zealous efforts to excite his fellow students to the more diligent cultivation of polite literature. Conscious of his own mental superiority, he felt no envious apprehension of their outstripping him; or, if they had, his future character renders it evident, that he would have been the first to rejoice in their success. It was impossible that the union of so much application with so much talent should fail of producing great results. He was accordingly soon looked up to as a first rate youth, and though but a lad, was employed to compose most of the public harangues and discourses of eloquence that were delivered in the University, and wrote some things even for the professors themselves. He was also entrusted with the education of the two sons of Count Leonstein. His proficiency in the Greek was so remarkable, that even at this early age he composed *Rudiments* of the language which were afterwards published.

During his residence at Heidelberg, Melancthon, who was so eminently formed for friendship, contracted an intimacy with several persons of merit. Among these were Wimphelingus, Sturmius, Gautherus, and Sorbillus. He was an inmate of the well known Pallas, a man pre-eminently distinguished for his wisdom, virtue and benevolence, and for many years the brightest ornament of the academy.

Heidelberg had not the honor of educating Melancthon more than three years. He was naturally of a feeble constitution, and the situation of the place did not appear to agree with him. This circumstance, together with the severe disappointment he suffered in being refused a higher degree in the university than he had hitherto obtained, *solely* as it was alleged, *on account of his youth* determined him to remove to Tubingen, a town on the Neckar, in the duchy of Wurtemberg. The university was daily increasing in reputation, and he entered it in the month of September, 1512. It had been founded by Prince Eberhard I. about five and thirty years before, who had been careful to procure the most celebrated men of the time for professors in every branch of literature and theology.

At Tubingen our aspiring youth attended all the different professors of classical and polite learning, devoting himself especially to mathematics, jurisprudence, logic, medicine, and theology. In medicine he studied Galen so thoroughly, that he could repeat the greatest part of his treatises; and although theology, as it was then taught, consisted in little else than scholastic subtleties, knotty questions, unintelligible jargon, and absurdities compounded of superstition and profaneness, he began to be much devoted to the more sober and rational part of it. Here he first became acquainted with Oecolampadius, who was his senior by several years: and as he mentions in one of his letters, they used to read Hesiod together. But, of all the professors, Henry Bebelius, distinguished for his skill in history, John Brassicanus, John Stofflerus, in the mathematical department, and Francis Stadianus, the public lecturer on Aristotle, appear to have attracted his highest esteem. He has mentioned the two latter in particular with applause and affection in his writings. Stofflerus had for many years the sole care of calculating and arranging the calendar, a task which Melancthon affirms he executed with great labor and with equal skill. "Had it not been," says he, "for his indefatigable application, we should have known nothing of the distinction of times and the changes of the months—nor of the seasons for ploughing, sowing, planting, and other agricultural pursuits, nor of a variety of other useful and ingenious arts." He addresses him in the dedication or preface to his public oration on the Liberal Arts, in these terms: "I am indebted to your kindness not only for what I know, but for what I am desirous of knowing; and I am desirous of knowing whatever becomes me. How can I sufficiently testify my regard and admiration for one who, during the many years in which he has diligently investigated the abtruse parts of mathematical science, has been constantly stimulating the studious in general, and myself in particular, by every mark of kindness, to pursue an honorable renown." Francis Stadianus he describes in the strongest terms: "He was a man of learning, and lived in such a manner as to deserve the affection of all the learned and the good!"

Melancthon had not yet attained the age of seventeen when he was created Doctor in Philosophy, or *Master of Arts*. This took place on the 25th of January, in the year 1513, when he immedi-

ately commenced a course of private tuition; but not long afterwards he became a public lecturer at Tubingen. General admiration was soon excited by the profound knowledge and elegant taste he discovered in the Latin classics. A considerable portion of time was occupied every day in delivering public lectures, which were not exclusively devoted to the learned languages, but embraced an extraordinary variety of subjects, as rhetoric, logic, ethics, mathematics, and theology. At the same time he particularly directed the attention of his scholars to the classical compositions of Virgil, Terence, Cicero, Livy and the Greek writers. He may be justly regarded as the restorer of *Terence*, whose poetical compositions, through the ignorance of his transcribers and publishers, had hitherto appeared only in a prosaic dress. Melancthon, having reduced them to a proper arrangement, presented them to the public in their present form. In this labor he showed his discrimination and taste; for Cicero eulogizes Terence both for the purity of his diction and the beauty of his compositions, representing them as the rule and standard of the language.

This bright star in the literary hemisphere, the brighter for the profound darkness which surrounded it, could not fail of attracting the attention of the great men of the age. So early as the year 1515 the sagacious and learned Erasmus of Rotterdam, exclaimed in terms of rapturous admiration: "What hopes may we not conceive of Philip Melancthon, though as yet very young, and almost a boy, but equally to be admired for his proficiency in both languages! What quickness of invention! What purity of diction! What vastness of memory! What variety of reading! What a modesty and gracefulness of behavior! and what a princely mind!" A eulogium so remarkable, and bestowed by such a man, on a stripling of only *eighteen*, was surely no inconsiderable testimony to his wonderful merit.

Nor was this the only occasion on which this accomplished scholar expressed his admiration. His works abound with similar encomiums: it will be sufficient to select two or three. Writing to Oecolampadius he says, "Of Melancthon I have already the highest opinion, and cherish the most magnificent hopes: so much so, that I am persuaded Christ designs this youth to excel us all: *he will totally eclipse Erasmus!*" Mosellanus having interceded with him upon occasion of some injurious reports that had been circulated respecting the remarks of Melancthon upon his paraphrase on the New Testament, and implored him not to suffer himself to be unfavorably impressed by them, Erasmus replied, "Philip Melancthon is in no need of my patronage or defence." In a letter which Erasmus addressed to him, he concludes thus, "Farewell, most learned Melancthon, use all thine energies that the splendid hopes which Germany conceives of thy genius and thy piety may not only be equalled, but exceeded." On another occasion, in a letter to Julius Pflug, the celebrated counsellor of George, Duke of Saxony, he gives Melancthon this character: "He not only excels in learning and eloquence, but by a certain fatality is a *general favorite*. Honest and candid men are fond of him, and *even his adversaries cannot hate him!*" "Happy," exclaims Jortin, "is the person whom this description suits! It is not safe to attack him; the public will revenge his wrongs and take his part against you!" Seckendorf remarks, that were the various eulogies which literary men, and *even religious opponents* have pronounced upon Melancthon, to be collected together, they would fill a very considerable volume.

To a much earlier period, probably, may be referred the oration mentioned in a very curious passage of one of Hugh Latimer's sermons, which evinces the astonishing celebrity of this youthful scholar and reformer. "Here I have occasion to tell you a story which happened at Cambridge. Master Bilney, or rather Saint Bilney that suffered death for God's word's sake, the same Bilney was the instrument whereby God called me to knowledge, for I may thank him, next to God, for that knowledge that I have in the word of God. For I was as obstinate a Papist as any was in England, insomuch that when I should be made Bachelor of Divinity, my whole oration went against Phillippe Melancthon and against his opinions. Bilney hearde mee at that time and perceived that I was zealous without knowledge: and hee came to mee afterward in my study, and desired mee for God's sake to heare his confession: I did so—and to say the very truth, by his confession I learned more than before in many yeares. So from that time forward I begunne to smell the word of God, and forsooke the schoole doctors and such fooleries."—*Latimer's Sermons, page* 124.

Latimer afterwards said, in a sermon preached before Edward VI., who expected him in England, "I hear say Melancthon, that great clerk, should come hither. I would wish him, and such as he is, two hundred pounds a year. The king should never want it in his coffers at the year's end."

Melancthon took upon himself the laborious task of revising the works published by Thomas Anshelmus, a noted printer at Tubingen. The greatest part of his time, not immediately devoted to his professional duties or his private studies, was bestowed in editing a ponderous folio work of Nauclerus, to which a preface was prefixed by Capnio. Originally, it was in fact, nothing but a confused heap of fables, mingled with historical facts; and Melancthon bestowed a labor upon it very disproportionate to its intrinsic merit, in arranging, correcting, purifying, and almost rewriting it. In this case we can only praise him for his industry.

During his residence at Tubingen, he had an opportunity of rendering essential service to his early friend and patron Capnio, who was involved in a disagreeable contention with certain ecclesiastics. It happened thus. The divines and monks of Cologne, instigated by a Jew of the name of Pfefferkorn, who had professed Christianity, obtained an edict from the emperor to authorize them to burn all the Jewish writings as heretical, excepting the Bible. The Jews instantly implored the emperor to suspend his order till these books had been examined by a competent committee of learned men. To this very reasonable petition he consented. Capnio, who had prosecuted the study of the Hebrew language under some learned Jews, both at Vienna and at Rome, and who had become conversant with the Cabalistic writings, was appointed by the Elector of Mentz to be an arbitrator in the controversy. Having given it as his opinion, that no other books should be destroyed but such as were found to be written expressly against Jesus Christ, the emperor approved the decision, and restored the books to the Jews. At this the monks and inquisitors of Cologne were violently exasperated and not only loaded him with invectives, but used every means to induce the court of Rome to persue him with the thunder of excommunication At this critical juncture, Melancthon was of essential use to his early patron, and frequent conferences took place between them, both at Tubingen and at Stutgard, the place where Capnio resided. Neither the advice nor the zealous efforts of a warm friend were wanting in his defence, which, co-operating with his high literary reputation, resulted in the honora-

ble acquittal of Capnio. This celebrated character died very poor at the age of sixty-seven. "On account of his virtue and merit," says Melancthon, "his memory ought to be cherished. He served his country with great diligence and judgment, and promoted assiduously the Hebrew language, so important to scholars. His candor was remarkable, and he was devoid of envy and malevolence. For these reasons he was much esteemed by learned men."

One of the earliest of Melancthon's productions, now extant, is an Oration on the Liberal Arts, delivered at Tubingen in the year 1517, at twenty years of age. It indicates the elegance of his mind and the variety of his reading. After a suitable introduction, he relates the classical story of the seven stringed lyre and the origin of the liberal arts. The oration proceeds with a detail of these arts and a brief recital of their origin and progress. It glows with animation as it approaches the close. "Let the example of those illustrious persons who surround me, inspire you. Be animated by the great and glorious expectations of your country, and apply the utmost vigor of your minds to what you know to be of pre-eminent importance, the attainment of sound learning and real virtue. Do not be seduced from this noble course by flattering pleasures or by evil examples. Let no dishonorable principle influence your minds: and *that* I call dishonorable which diverts you from the literary pursuits and from the sacred studies to which you are devoted."

Considering the very important part Melancthon was destined to act in the Reformation, it would be pleasing, were it possible, to trace the formation of his religious principles and modes of thinking with as much exactness as we are able to detail his literary career. The history of piety is even more interesting than the history of genius. To discriminate with accuracy the different states of the mind, to ascertain the changes of feeling at successive periods of early life, to witness at once the progressive establishment of moral character and the development of intellectual capacity, is, and ever must be, highly instructive. Melancthon was endowed with a soul formed of the finest materials, cast in the gentlest mould, and ever ready to listen with attention to reason and argument; but in proportion as the original prejudices of education had entrenched themselves in a mind delicate, discerning, and full of sensibility like his, the attempt to dispossess principles so dear to him, must have been difficult and hazardous. It is long before one, so constituted, can renounce what has been held sacred; then, not without obvious and substantial reasons. Offence is easily taken at the first and most distant appearances of what is deemed error, and, under favoring circumstances, in an unenlightened age, an extraordinary degree of superstition is the natural result. Melancthon expresses, on one occasion, the pungent sorrow which the recollection of his former zeal in the idolatrous services of the Catholic church occasioned. It is easy to believe, therefore, that he must have endured many secret conflicts, many heart-rending struggles, previously to his separation from that communion. The only illustrative fact transmitted to us affords some good evidence that his convictions originated in the best manner, and that his early religious views were derived from the only pure source of instruction. Capnio having presented him with a small Bible which had been recently printed at Basil by the well known John Frobenius, or Froben, Melancthon accustomed himself to write down upon the margin such explanatory hints and such useful illustrations of particular passages, as either occurred to his own reflections or could be collected from the different ancient writers with whose works he was conversant; a practice which at least proves the diligent attention he began to pay to the sacred volume. This Bible was his constant companion. He never failed to carry it with him wherever he went, and during the public service at church constantly held it in his hand, to direct and enliven his devotions. This practice furnished an occasion to his bigotted and no less malignant adversaries, who perceived he made use of a volume of a different size from the prayer-book, to represent him as engaged in reading even in the public church, what was very unsuitable both to the occasion and the place! No efforts were omitted to render him odious: but Envy and Persecution waged an unequal war, and were defeated.

The spirit manifested on this occasion by these religious barbarians perfectly harmonised with the language of one of the monkish fraternity, Conrad Heresbach, whose preposterous ignorance and bigotry have furnished a standing joke ever since the Reformation. "A new language," says he, "has been invented, which is called *Greek;* guard carefully against it, it is the mother of every species of heresy. I observe in the hands of a great many people, a book written in this language, which they call the *New Testament;* it is a book full of thorns and serpents. With respect to Hebrew, it is certain, my dear brethren, that all who learn it are instantly converted to Judaism."!!

After a residence of about six years, Melancthon removed from Tubingen to the University of Wittemberg, the metropolis of the circle of Upper Saxony. In this situation, he was immediately introduced into a scene of great labor and extensive usefulness. This university was founded in the year 1502, under the auspices of the Elector Frederic, who spared no pains to advance it to respectability and distinction. The license of the Emperor Maximilian, and the bull granted by the Pope, for its establishment, are still extant. The celebrity of Melancthon, seconded by the powerful recommendation of Capnio, induced the Elector to determine upon giving him employment in the university. Several letters were interchanged on the subject, and the result was, the formal appointment of Melancthon to the Greek Professorship. Upon this occasion, Capnio applied to him with prophetic accuracy the remarkable language of Jehovah to Abraham: "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee . . . . . and I will bless thee, and make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing:" adding, "this accords with the presentiment of my mind; and thus I hope it will be with thee hereafter, my Philip, my care and my comfort!" He went to Wittemberg on the twenty-fifth day of August, in the year 1518, at the age of twenty-one. His name is inserted in the documents of the university with marked distinction.

The general sensation excited at Tubingen on this occasion may be imagined from the language of Simlerus. "The whole city lamented his departure. No one can conceive or estimate how much the academy lost of distinction and of emolument when he departed." His journey was performed on horseback, by way of Nuremberg and Leipsic; and he availed himself of the opportunity of contracting a friendship with Picamerus, Moselanus, Camicianus and other eminent characters.

Upon the fourth day after his arrival at Wittemberg he commenced his public duties as a professor in the customary mode of delivering an oration, which attracted an unusual degree of applause. Luther is lavish in his commendations, and in a letter addressed to Spalatine, he says that it was in-

conceivably learned and elegant, and excited such universal admiration, that every one forgot the comparative meanness of Melancthon's personal appearance. In consequence of his settlement at Wittemberg, immense numbers crowded to the university, and his audience sometimes amounted to fifteen, and even five and twenty hundred persons. He had the honor of being Luther's instructor in the Greek language.

It is amusing enough to hear the terms in which M. Baillet mentions the intimacy which, from this moment, commenced between Melancthon and Luther. "Being called to Wittemberg," says he, "in the twenty-second year of his age, *Melancthon fell into the hands of Luther, who abused his easy disposition, and availed himself of all those fine talents which ought to have been devoted to the service of the Catholic church!*"

In truth, this was an event of the utmost importance, not only in reference to these eminent individuals themselves, but on account of the influence of their ardent friendship upon the Reformation in general. The profound learning and cultivated taste of the one, the vigorous zeal, independent spirit, and dauntless heroism of the other, alike conduced to dissipate the delusions of the age. Both adopted the same general views; and each was equally solicitous of removing that veil of Egyptian darkness which overspread the face of the world: yet they were constitutionally different. The one verged to the extreme of boldness, the other to that of caution; but, like Moses and Aaron among the ancient Israelites, their different talents were admirably suited to promote the general object. Truth would undoubtedly have suffered had the one been less energetic and daring, or the other less moderate, and cultivated.

It would not be difficult to speculate on the ill effects likely to have resulted to the interests of true religion, if these eminent men, instead of being united in strict friendship, had cherished hostile sentiments towards each other. This would probably have been the case, had Melancthon continued a Papist, or had he promoted the views of those who appeared to "halt between two opinions." 1 Kings, 18, 21. The impetuous temper and resolute firmness of Luther could endure neither opposition nor neutrality. By the collision of two contending parties a third was in reality produced, whose leading maxim was to avoid extremes, and who were ready to make every sacrifice to obtain a delusive peace or to secure personal convenience. They would have abandoned what they even esteemed sacred, in order to terminate this religious war; and, it is to be feared, would have willingly entered into negociations with the advocates of error and superstition, upon the principle of relinquishing the conquests which truth had already acquired, and which conscience demanded of them never to cede. At the head of this party, the learned, witty, vacillating, avaricious, and artful Erasmus is unquestionably to be placed. Unwilling to relinquish his connection with the Catholics, and enlist himself under the banners of the Reformation, he was yet too penetrating to be ignorant of the abuses of Popery, or blind to its excessive absurdities; and aware that the reformers had reason and truth on their side, he was solicitous, especially while the victory was doubtful, of conciliating their esteem without unwarily pledging himself to act a conspicuous part in what he termed the *Lutheran tragedy*. In consequence of this indecision he dissatisfied both, and failed of acquiring the honors it was in the power of Popes to bestow, and the more valuable distinction which they could *not* give, but which the unbought affection of independent minds and holy reformers would have conferred.

The Papists and the coadjutors of Erasmus would have been equally glad of Melancthon. His influence in the university of Wittemberg, and his literary fame, now diffused to the extremities of the empire, and swiftly circulating throughout the whole civilized world, would have invigorated the hostility of the one, or promoted the temporizing policy of the other. It would have proved a mighty bulwark of defence, which, in case of the preponderance of either party, would have been strength to the weak, and power even to the strong. Melancthon was scarcely less detested than Luther by the violent Catholics; and Erasmus, in the course of a long letter addressed to him, alludes to his having exhorted him to abandon the reformers, though he declares he had not very strenuously urged him to it, knowing it would be labor lost, but still he could have wished he had applied himself entirely to literature. His purpose, he says, was to promote the good of both parties and dissuade from tumults, and he wished a reformation might be made without strife or contention.

The removal of Melancthon, therefore, to Wittemberg, by which he was introduced to the immediate and intimate friendship of Luther, ought to be regarded as a most memorable event. Luther unbosomed his feelings to this new and invaluable associate, consulting him on all occasions, and anxiously availing himself of his superiority in literary acquirements.

Whoever is accustomed to observe the movements and to admire the wisdom of a superintending Providence will mark this occurrence. He will not be disposed to attribute it to a happy casualty, but consider it as the result of a superior and wise arrangement. He will connect it with all its circumstances, and trace it to all its consequences. Accustomed to comprehensive views of things, he will not resemble the ignorant rustic that steps across the spring whence a Nile, an Euphrates, or a Ganges originates, without any emotion, and without the capacity to realize those images of grandeur and sublimity that present themselves in a similar situation to the enlightened philosopher; but he will pause, ponder, compare, and look around him. The Almighty Ruler of the world proceeds in the large system of his operations in a similar manner, in some respects, to every intelligent agent acting on a smaller scale. Does the skilful architect prepare his materials for the building which he is about to construct, and fit in each particular stone or ornament to its place with discriminating care? And is there any improbability in the belief that when the Universal Agent is about to produce an extraordinary work, he prepares, by a process adapted to the purpose, whatever materials are proper for its execution? Moral operations require moral instruments, and in the whole machinery of circumstances an intelligent and pious mind will see much to admire. Amidst the rubbish of error which had accumulated century after century till the Reformation, God determined to erect the temple of truth, and his providence cleared an ample space, chose a variety of workmen, and reared the admirable superstructure. And as in the erection of a building there must be different kinds of laborers, all co-operating together and all essential to complete the undertaking, so it was requisite, in rearing this great edifice, to prepare and employ persons very differently constituted, but all capable of useful co-operation. In this point of light it becomes us to contemplate the preparatory course of Melancthon's education, the important station he filled, and the celebrity he obtained at Tubingen, and particularly his removal thence to the scene of his future labors. He was selected by Providence for great purposes, and qualified by a suitable pro-

cess for the part he was destined to act. His literary fame and his vast acquirements were not only of essential service, but were particularly needed at that precise period when they were ready for public use. Short-sighted indeed, or criminally blind must he be, who does not perceive the same superintendence here as in the guidance of Joseph to Egypt, or David to the camp of Saul. If the Reformation claimed the steady efforts of true courage and inextinguishable zeal, be it remembered also, that it no less required a proportion of nice discernment and literary skill;—if a superstition which invested a mortal with the prerogative of infallibility were to be attacked and levelled with the dust, the ignorance which, with its characteristic blindness, supported that superstition, was at the same time to be dethroned and demolished;—if old abuses were to be removed, and a new order of things to be introduced and sytematized, it was desirable to find not only vigor and zeal to clear away the rubbish of error, but elegance of taste to clothe unwelcome novelties with attractive beauty;—in a word, if existing circumstances called for a Martin Luther, they also demanded a Philip Melancthon!

CHAPTER II.

General Observations—Revival and purification of the Peripatetic Philosophy by Melancthon—His early labors at Wittemberg, and his increasing influence throughout Germany—Extracts from his Oration "de Corrigendis Adolescentiæ Studiis." 1518.

After long years of depression, and almost of total extinction, philosophy, literature, and theology at length revived. It was impossible that any of these should prosper during a period in which the human mind was burdened by innumerable superstitions, gigantic in magnitude and ferocious in character. The mental faculties were unable to expand or even to stir beneath the oppressive weight; and century after century rolled on, scarcely presenting any thing worthy of the historian to record or the moralist to admire. But the sixteenth century marked a new era in the calender of time, by affording some facilities to the circulation of thought, and the comparatively free exercise of public opinion. In proportion as it became possible to express sentiments and to announce discoveries in science or religion, without instantly incurring the charge of heresy, and being inevitably consigned to perpetual imprisonment or death, knowledge increased and truth lifted up her drooping head.* It is true, the imperfections which usually characterize first discoveries were in this instance apparent, but the clouds of prejudice and the mists of ignorance gradually melted away; objects which were blended together became distinctly perceived, and this "morning light" of scientific and religious discovery "shone more and more unto the perfect day."—*Proverbs* iv. 18.

To trace the almost infinitely diversified causes, remote and proximate, of this mighty change would be an interesting, though perhaps a very difficult undertaking. It would be necessary to show not only the effects produced by the various great events that have occurred in the moral world upon the general state and character of the particular nations whence they originated, and where they particularly influenced, or upon human character in general in the age in which they occurred; but also the manner in which they resulted from the previous state of mankind and affected succeeding times, as well as the intimate connection and reciprocal influence subsisting between them or resulting from their operation.

A writer of very considerable merit, (Villers on the Reformation, page 7,) remarks, that "A man who, without knowing the nature of the course of a river, should arrive on its banks, seeing it here gliding through an extensive plain, there confined with narrow vallies, in another place foaming beneath the precipice of a cataract; this man would take the first turning where it might be concealed by a projection, for the origin of the river; ascending higher, a new turn, the cataract, will occasion the same allusion; at length he reaches its source, he takes the mountain from which it issues for the first cause of the river; but he will soon think that the sides of the mountains would be exhausted by so continual a torrent; he will see clouds collected, the rains, without which the dried mountain could not supply a spring. Then the clouds become the first cause; but it was the winds which brought these here, by passing over vast seas; but it was the sun who attracted the clouds from the sea; but whence arises this power of the sun? Behold him then soon entangled in the researches of speculative physics, by seeking a cause, an absolute foundation, from which he may finally deduce the explanation of so many phenomena.

"Thus the historian who inquires what was the cause which led to the reduction of the authority of the popes, to the terrible thirty years' war, to the humiliation of the house of Austria, the establishment of a powerful opposition in the heart of the empire, the foundation of Holland as a free state, and so of other occurrences, will at first see the origin of all these events in the Reformation; and will attribute them absolutely to its influence. But urging his inquiries further, he discovers that this Reformation itself is evidently only a necessary result of other circumstances which precede it; an event of the sixteenth century, with which the fifteenth, to use the expression of Leibnitz, was pregnant; at most the cataract of the river."

But it will be necessary to waive these considerations, which, though attractive in themselves, do not strictly comport with the nature and design of this biographical memoir. It may, however, be remarked in general, that by means of the art of printing in the fifteenth century the Latin classics were easily multiplied, and several learned men published both the Greek and Roman writers with scholia and notes. Among the laborers in this vast field the name of Politiano stands pre-eminent. Besides the academy at Pisa, established by Lorenso de'Medici, another and still more important institution was formed at Florence, where the Greek language was taught by learned Greeks and Italians, under his auspices and by his liberality. Men of rank, and illustrious females also devoted themselves to study; of the former, Giovanni Pico, of Mirandula, who at the age of twenty-one, had the reputation of being acquainted with twenty-two different languages; and of the latter, Cassandra Fidelis were the most remarkable. But it must not be imagined that this taste was universally diffused; for though the fragrant flowers of poesy grew in a few places

* This consideration must be restricted to those countries or places where a degree of successful resistance had been opposed to papal domination, such as Germany and Switzerland; for, as we shall afterwards see, light was very far from being generally diffused; and even at that period Copernicus, an eminent astronomer, and native of Thorn, in Prussia, was confined to a prison by Pope Urban VIII. for daring to maintain the solar system, and the annual and diurnal motions of the earth. The celebrated Florentine, Galileo, also, was twice summoned before the Inquisition, and twice sent to grace the cells of a prison for heretically maintaining the truth of the Copernican system. Copernicus was born January 10, 1472, and expired in the seventieth year of his age, May 24, 1543. Galileo was born in 1564, and died at Arceti, near Florence, in January, 1642.

and some fruit-bearing trees were planted here and there in classic ground; the general aspect which the world presented to the eye was that of a thorny wilderness or a barren desert.

The revival of letters, and the reformation of religion reciprocally influenced and promoted each other. The reformers were convinced that ignorance had been one of the principal causes of the corruption of doctrine, and hence they were solicitous of seeing philosophy restored to its purity, and truth to her throne. The boldness with which they attacked religious error and despotism contributed to the advancement of literature: the zeal with which some of them cultivated literature by reflecting a beam of light on biblical criticism, contributed to the cause of religion. When the Romish church reigned with unrivalled dominion in the West, she resisted the study of the oriental and other languages. She decreed the faith of others upon the sole authority of her popes, her councils, and her charters, and too tractable slaves submitted to the imposition. The attack of this system demanded a knowledge of languages, of the principles of sound criticism, and of sacred and profane antiquities. The New Testament, and the Septuagint Version of the Old, required an accurate and extensive acquaintance with Greek, the study of which was particularly promoted by MELANCTHON. The reforming spirit diffused itself beyond the reformers themselves, and many even in the bosom of the Catholic church, as Erasmus, Ludovicus Vives, Faber, and Marius Nizolius, censured the scholastic method of philosophizing, inveighed against the corruptions of the age, and assiduously cultivated general literature. Besides, the zealous supporters of the Romish hierarchy finding themselves attacked by literary weapons so ably wielded, were necessitated to have recourse to measures of defence, which must of course consist in the cultivation of all possible familiarity with letters, and with ecclesiastical antiquities. But these studies were never pursued to the same extent as amongst Protestants, who gave the first impulse to improvement, and the finishing blow to the massive edifice of corruption.

In the beginning of the sixteenth century, though the scholastic philosophy began to fall into contempt, Aristotle retained a considerable degree of authority. The Platonic system having totally declined, the peripatetic philosophy became universally victorious. The Catholics zealously promoted it because of its adaptation to the defence of their system, and among the Protestants many learned men were followers of Aristotle, so far as their superior reverence to evangelical truth would permit. On this point Luther and Melancthon differed in opinion. The former who had studied the schoolmen, at first attached himself to the *Nominalists*, but afterwards rejected the whole system with contempt. Melancthon is also to be classed amongst the principal supporters of this party.

The controversy which had so long subsisted between these parties was marked by every species of polemic, and sometimes even of pugilistic violence. Ludovicus Vives represents himself as having been witness to disputes in which, after having vented upon each other every species of abusive language the parties proceeded to blows, and this not only with their fists, but with clubs and swords, so that many have been wounded and even killed; and Camerarius states that similar disorders prevailed in the academy at Tubingen, which Melancthon could scarcely suppress. Erasmus in his joking manner, alludes to these evils in one of his epistles. "We are making preparations," he writes, "for a war against the Turks, A. D. 1518. With what view soever this be undertaken we ought to pray God that it may be profitable not to a few, but to all of us in common. Should we conquer them it is to be supposed (for we shall hardly put them all to the sword) that attempts will be made to bring them over to Christianity. Shall we then put into their hands an Occam, a Durandus, a Scotus, a Gabriel, or an Alvarus? What will they think of us (for after all they are rational creatures) when they hear of our intricate and perplexed subtleties concerning instants, formalities, quiddities and relations?—What, when they observe our quibbling professors so little of a mind, that they dispute together till they turn pale with fury, call names, spit in one another's faces, and even come to blows? What, when they behold the Jacobins fighting for their Thomas, the Minorites for their most refined and seraphic doctors, and the Nominalists and Realists each defending their own jargon, and attacking that of their adversaries?"—*Epistle* 329.

When Louis XI. king of France, published an edict against the Nominalists, in the year 1474, ordering their books to be fastened up with iron chains in the libraries, that they might not be read, and requiring the youth of the academies to reject their doctrines, their principal leaders fled into England and Germany, and attached themselves to the Reformers. Luther, however, perceiving the support which the scholastic philosophy afforded to the errors of the Catholic church, and conceiving that the logical and metaphysical sentiments of Aristotle incorporated with it, had occasioned all the celebrated disputes and divisions of previous ages, rejected both; but it is to be remarked that he rather opposed the false doctrines founded on Aristotle, through the ignorance and perversity of mankind, than the principles of philosophizing which he established. "I am persuaded," says he, "that neither Thomas, nor all the Thomists together, ever understood a single chapter of Aristotle."

At first Melancthon united with Luther in condemning Aristotle, from a conviction that his principles and modes of reasoning were injurious to genuine Christianity, but he very soon altered his opinion, and thought he might be employed as a valuable auxiliary in the propagation of truth. This circumstance has occasioned his being much misrepresented by certain writers, to whose statements, the system upon which during his whole future life he conducted the education of youth, is an ample refutation.

Melancthon attempted the revival of the pure peripatetic philosophy, though he agreed with Luther on the subject of the scholastic system. In several passages of his writings he utterly condemns the latter as generating dissention rather than promoting truth; and though he took Aristotle for his guide, it was only in philosophical inquiries, and so far as his principles might be connected with utility. His devout and penetrating mind always paid a superior deference to the dictates of Revelation. In his oration on Aristotle, he thus expresses himself, "I will add something concerning philosophy, and the reasons for believing that of Aristotle to be the most useful for the church. It is agreed, I think, by all, that logic is of prime importance, because it teaches method and order, it defines fitly, divides justly, connects aptly, judges and separates monstrous associations. Those who are ignorant of this art, tear and mangle the subjects of discourse as puppies do rags. I admire the simile of Plato, who highly extols it as resembling the fire which Prometheus brought from heaven, to kindle a light in the minds of men by which they might be able to form correct ideas. But he does not furnish us with the precepts of the art, so that we cannot dispense with the logic of Aristotle.

That of the Stoics is not extant, and instead of being a simple method of reasoning fit for the explanation of profound subjects, it appears to have been a complete labyrinth of intricacies, and in fact a mere corruption of the art."

Melancthon was considered in the German schools in the light of a COMMON PRECEPTOR. Uniting the study of the Aristotelian philosophy with ancient learning in general, the plan which he adopted was to extract out of Aristotle all that was essentially good, to illustrate it by the aids of literature and genuine criticism, and to adapt it to the principles of true religion. Nor did he follow Aristotle implicitly; whatever was valuable in the writings and doctrines of the Stoics and Platonics, and whatever his own genius suggested, was incorporated into his system.

This plan was pursued in most of the German academies under the sanction both of the civil and ecclesiastical authorities, and from its first promoter was denominated the *Philippic* method. In all the Lutheran schools abridgments of the various branches of philosophy by Melancthon, composed in a familiar style, were constantly and for a long period taught; of this nature were his *Logic*, *Ethics*, *Physics*, and his *Treatise on the Soul*. Nor did he confine his attention to a few subjects only, but with the most exemplary zeal and assiduity, reduced almost every art and science into a form and arrangement which inconceivably abbreviated the labor of the student.

Vitus Winshemius, a very competent judge, speaks of these publications in the highest terms of commendation, as shortening the Aristotelian road to knowledge. He characterizes their author, with great propriety, as resembling the industrious bee flying through the fields of universal science in all directions, and collecting the choicest and sweetest portions from the prime productions of every writer.

On various occasions Melancthon publicly delivered discourses on the method of studying philosophy, and his opinions were so universally reverenced, that he acquired the highest fame and the most useful influence. The precepts of art and science had been hitherto very imperfectly taught, and with a great intermixture of truth and error. These he systematized and reduced to order; rejecting what was erroneous, explaining what was obscure, and arranging what was confused.

Several learned men from Italy and Great Britain, who became tutors in the German schools, and assiduously promoted the peripatetic philosophy, materially assisted him in these laudable efforts. It is to be lamented indeed, that the learned of Italy, France, England, and Germany, did not totally discard Aristotle as a guide, and strike out a more independent plan; but we must not despise the light though it be mingled with some darkness, nor undervalue the labors of distinguished men, because they did not undertake what we deem desirable, or accomplish what is now perceived to have been practicable.

In the genuine spirit of a literary Reformer, instead of merely pursuing the course which custom had prescribed or indolence would have dictated, Melancthon applied his active mind to the discovery of the best means of inspiring a taste for literature, and of promoting the great ends of study. When he first arrived at Wittemberg nothing could exceed the miserable condition of philosophy and letters as well as of religion, so that he found an ample and unoccupied field of important labor. The liberal arts and sciences were sunk into the most wretched state, and concealed in the profoundest darkness. So completely were all men plunged into abject barbarism, that many, though they dared not venture upon open hostility, being restrained by the authority of the prince, yet secretly despised and disparaged learning, and slandered Melancthon; the printing offices did not possess any copies of the Greek writings, and the students were necessitated to write out passages as they were explained to them for their own use.

Melancthon, with a laudable impatience, instantly applied himself to the removal of these evils. The desert which spread its vast and cheerless extent before his eyes overgrown with weeds, he was anxious by assiduous cultivation to convert into a literary paradise. In the first year of his residence at Wittemberg he read lectures to crowded auditories upon Homer, and upon the Greek text of St. Paul's epistle to Titus. Luther speaks of him in various letters to his friends in the highest terms of commendation, stating that his lectures were so extremely popular, that all the principal theologians attended him, and high and low became inspired with the love of Greek. Amongst other epithets, he calls him the *most learned and most truly Grecian, Philip Melancthon*. "He is a mere boy and a stripling if you consider his age; but our great man and master, if you reflect on the variety of his knowledge, which extends to almost every book. He is distinguished not only for his acquaintance, but for his critical knowledge of both languages, nor is he unskilled in Hebrew learning."

The excessive ardor of his mind produced a considerable effect upon his constitution, and the Elector Frederic addressed an affectionate letter to him on the subject, wherein he admonishes him to be careful of his health, and not to exert himself too much, offering him the best wines his cellar could produce, and reminding him of Paul's language to Timothy, to "use a little wine for his stomach's sake and his frequent infirmities." 1 Tim. 5 : 23. "This," he stated, "was no less obligatory than any other admonition."

Melancthon was scarcely seated in his professor's chair, when he commenced an attack upon prevailing prejudices, and announced a plan of reform. He determined that youth should *study* as well as frequent the university, and that they should be put in possession both of motives and means for this purpose. His zeal appears never to have diminished through the course of his long and laborious life. It was the least of all his distinctions to have acquired a great name, for he rendered essential service both to the cause of literature and religion.

A few weeks only had elapsed since his arrival at Wittemberg, when he delivered in the month of October an oration, to which some references have already been made, on reforming the studies of youth. He congratulates them on being placed under the auspices of the illustrious Frederic, and on their numerous advantages for the acquisition of learning; and while attentive to the various other departments of human knowledge, he particularly urges them to the study of the Greek writers and philosophy; "but let no one trifle in philosophizing lest he should at length totally lose sight of common sense. Let him rather select the best things from the best authors, for the purposes of improvement both in the knowledge of nature and in morals. The study of Greek literature is of essential importance; it in fact comprehends universal science, for their writers discuss morals in a most copious and appropriate manner. The treatise of Aristotle on this subject, the laws of Plato, and the best of their poets, may be read with the utmost advantage. Homer amongst the Greeks may be called a fountain of knowledge; Horace and Virgil hold a similar pre-eminence amongst the Romans."

He speaks in recommendation of history as cal-

culated to direct us in the skilful management of public and private affairs.

"But," he adds, "the manner in which you apply to *sacred studies*, is of the greatest importance. These, above all other pursuits, require judgment, experience, and diligence; and remember that the perfume of divine ointments, so to speak, far surpasses the aromatics of human literature. Under the guidance of God, the cultivation of the liberal arts will be rendered subservient to sacred objects, as Synesius intimates to Herculianus 'the noblest employment of life, is to use philosophy as a guide to divine knowledge.' If this should not be quite obvious to any one, let him consider that brass was sent by the King of Tyre, for the temple of Solomon, as well as superior metal: so it is in reference to theology which comprehends Hebrew and Greek literature, for the Latins drink from these streams and sources, and those foreign languages are requisite to be known, lest we should appear nothing better than ciphers amongst theologians. But there the accuracies and beauties of language will be seen, and the genuine sense of terms and expressions discovered with noontide evidence. Having ascertained the literal meaning of words, we shall be able to pursue the course of argument notwithstanding any frigid glosses, discordant comments, or other hinderances that may be interposed.

"Whenever we approach the fountains of truth, we shall begin to grow wise in Christ, his commandments will become obvious, and we shall be regaled by the blessed nectar of heavenly wisdom. When we have gathered the clusters amongst 'the vineyards of Engedi,' the bridegroom will come 'leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills,' and with the 'kisses of his mouth,' and the 'savor of his good ointments poured forth,' will anoint those who are conducted into the palaces of Eden. United to him we shall live and thrive, contemplating Zion and Salem in the secret silence of adoration. Such is the fruit of celestial knowledge, which will always prove worthy of our supreme regard when pure and unimpaired by human subtleties.

"The great importance then of giving a new impulse and direction to your studies, and the manner in which they are likely to become conducive to your mental and moral character are sufficiently obvious. Who can help deploring the state of our immediate predecessors, who, abandoning the light of learning, plunged into Tartarean darkness, and took up with the very dregs of knowledge? And who is not affected at the lamentable state of our own times deprived by negligence of our ancient authors, and of all the advantages which would have accrued from their writings had they been preserved? You should understand, therefore, the difficulties which attend the acquisition of the most valuable knowledge; nevertheless, industry will so overcome them, that I trust you will obtain that which is of real importance with far less expense of time and trouble than is generally devoted to what is absolutely useless.

"Your tutors will undertake the labor of making proper selections for you, and separating the frivolous from the useful in conducting you to the stores of Roman and Grecian literature. Let some of your leisure hours be occupied especially with the latter, and I will use my utmost endeavors to afford you every facility. From the very first I shall be careful to alleviate the laboriousness attending the grammatical part of language, by reading portions of the best writers for illustration. I shall notice, in passing, whatever may relate to the conduct of life, or the general knowledge of obscure subjects, so that by proper application we shall be able to accomplish the circle of human learning, and it will devolve on me to stimulate your diligence. Homer is in our hands and the Greek of Paul's Epistle to Titus, and you must pay great attention to ascertain by the strain of the discourse, the divine truths intended to be revealed.

"Here it is proper to remark, how much grammatical accuracy in language conduces to the knowledge of sacred mysteries, and what a difference appears among commentators, some of whom are versed in the Greek language, others ignorant of it; and in various cases what mistakes are the consequence. If we trifle on this subject, be assured we shall inevitably suffer for it.

"Enter then, O ye youths, enter upon your course of wholesome instruction with this sentiment in your constant recollection, *whoever determinately sets about a business has half accomplished it.* Do not be afraid of becoming wise: study the Roman authors, but especially attach yourselves to those of Greece, without the knowledge of whom the former cannot be properly understood, and whose compositions will conduce to the knowledge of general literature, and more than any others to the formation of the mind to taste and elegance. I cannot help anticipating the effect of your example, and fancying that I can see a few years hence Germany in various parts reviving in literature, the general state of morals ameliorated, and the minds of men, at present barbarously wild and barren as the desert, at length *tamed*, so to speak, and cultivated!

"Henceforth then you will devote yourselves to study, not only for the sake of your own personal advantage and that of posterity, but for the honor of our immortal Elector, who is by universal concurrence the best of princes, and has nothing more at heart than the promotion of literature. For myself I am resolved to try my utmost, both to accomplish the desires of the most pious of princes and the success of your studies. And with this design I solemnly devote myself, O ye illustrious princes and superintendents of this university, to your service: consecrating my youth to solid learning and not to useless or injurious pursuits, and confidently depending upon your kindness and protection."

CHAPTER III.

The State of Religion—Relics—Indulgences—Tetzel—Progress of the Controversy with the Court of Rome—Melancthon's Narrative of Luther—Public Disputation at Leipsic—Its Effects—Paper war between Melancthon and Eckius—Concise but satisfactory pamphlet and admirable spirit of the former. 1518 to 1520.

Turning from the schools of literature to the church of Christ, we find that, in reference to religion as well as science, Melancthon was called to Wittemberg at a most critical juncture. That we may duly appreciate his labors and form a correct idea of the state of ecclesiastical affairs, it will be requisite to glance at a few preceding events.

The Catholic church was at this period quiet and reposing. Though many circumstances had occurred to prepare the public mind for the introduction of a new order of things—though some portentous gatherings of the no distant tempest might have been discernable to attentive observers, when not only private persons but distinguished princes upbraided the despotism, the fraud, the avarice, the extortion, the licentiousness of the popish hierarchy, and even demanded a reform of abuses by means of a general council; yet the right of private judgment was not asserted, the supreme authority and infallibility of the Pope in religious affairs was not disputed, and the Roman Pontiff felt the utmost self-consciousness of security. The commotions which had been excited in some former ages by the Waldenses, Albigenses and Beghards, and more recently by the Bohemians, seemed to be at an end: and as in nature, the storm is frequently preceded

by a peculiar stillness diffused around, when the winds are hushed into peace, and not a leaf of the forest stirs; not a wave ripples on the tranquillized surface of the lake; not a bird flutters through the air to dissolve the universal enchantment; so the atmosphere of Rome at this time was hushed into the profoundest calm; not a breath of murmur stirred, not a tongue moved, not a voice was heard to excite alarm, and ecclesiastical authority lolled at perfect ease in the Papal chair. If the low mutterings of discontent began to roll, they were too distant to be heard, or too contemptible to be feared. If any intimation were given of the existence of rebellious feelings, they were only treated with the smile of ridicule. What mortal could storm the citadel of St. Peter, and overturn the turrets of superstition? Who dared resist the well established power of Papal domination? Where was a son of Jesse to be found, that could hope to slay the giant in his strength and glory?

After the execrable pontificates of Alendander VI. who expired in the year 1503, and of Julius II. whose sanguinary course was arrested by the arm of death in the year 1512, Leo X. assumed the ecclesiastical sceptre. His character was in many respects different from that of his predecessors. He was of a disposition more gentle, and of a taste far more refined. Historians have celebrated him as the patron of arts, sciences, and literature. Learned men resorted to his court, were honored by his friendship, and were employed to assist in plans for promoting knowledge which his elegant mind devised; but he was a lover of pleasure, an opponent of reform, and a crafty politician. Every means which he considered as conducive to the grandeur of the Roman See he instantly adopted, though at the same time he was dissipating its treasures by a boundless luxury.

The state of religion was inconceivably deplorable, and its very foundations were sapped by the substitution of public prayers to the Virgin, and the saints, in the place of those devotional sacrifices of the heart which are due exclusively to the eternal God.* The bishops and canons devoted themselves to sensuality, and even used the wealth intended for charitable purposes to support their personal grandeur and extravagance. They were oppressive to their inferiors, and servile, as might be expected, to those from whom they had any reason to anticipate emolument or patronage. All orders of the clergy, imitating their ecclesiastical superiors, who copied from the luxurious court of Leo, became utterly contemptible; and as a necessary consequence of these disorders, dissoluteness was associated with idleness, and every religious office publicly bought and sold. The discourses of those who pretended to preach, consisted of fabulous tales, reports of miracles and prodigies, scholastic subtleties, or grave assertions of the necessity of obedience to the decisions of the holy mother church, the merits of saints, the glory of the Virgin Mary, the virtue of relics, the duty of endowing churches and monasteries, the flame of purgatory, the utility of indulgences and other topics equally *edifying!* A monk of the Franciscan order at Basil, assured his audience from the pulpit, that *Scotus* had rendered greater services to the church than St. *Paul!*

Luther says of the monks, "Their fasting is more easy to them than our eating is to us. To one fasting day belonged three days of devouring. Every friar to his evening collation has two quarts of beer, a quart of wine, spice cakes or bread prepared with spice and salt, the better to relish their drink. Thus went these poor *fasting* brethren, they grew so pale and wan that they were like the *fiery angels.*"

There existed a particular order of friars in Italy, called *Fratres Ignorantiæ*, that is, *Brethren of Ignorance.* They were obliged to take solemn oaths that they would neither know, learn, nor understand any thing at all, but answer all questions with the word Nescio. Truly, said Luther, all friars are well worthy of that title, for they only read and babble out words, but feel no concern to understand them. They say, although we understand not the words, yet the Holy Ghost understands them, and the devil flies away. This was the friars' highest argument, who are enemies to all liberal arts and learning, for the Pope and the Cardinals conclude thus: "Should these brethren study and be learned, they would master us, therefore *saccum per neccum, hang a bag or sack about their necks*, and send them begging through cities, towns, and countries."

But something worse than ignorance attached to the monkish fraternity, of which two notable instances mentioned by Luther, will abundantly satisfy the reader. In the monastery at Isenach, says he, stands an image which I have seen. When a wealthy person came thither to pray to it, (it was Mary with her child,) the child turned away his face from the sinner to the mother, as if it refused to give ear to his praying, and was therefore to seek mediation and help of Mary the mother. But if the sinner gave liberally to that monastery, then the child turned to him again; and if he promised to give more, then the child showed itself very friendly and loving, and stretched out its arms over him in the form of a cross. But this image was made hollow within, and prepared with locks, lines, and screws; and behind it stood a knave to move them, and so were the people mocked and deceived, taking it to be a miracle wrought by divine providence.

A Dutchman making his confession to a mass-priest at Rome, promised by an oath to keep secret whatever the priest should impart to him till he came into Germany, upon which the priest gave him *a leg of the ass on which Christ rode into Jerusalem*, very neatly bound up in silken cloth, and said, "This is the holy relic on which the Lord Christ did corporeally sit, and with his sacred legs touched this ass's leg!" The Dutchman was wonderfully pleased, and carried the holy relic with him into Germany, and when he came upon the borders, boasted of his holy possession in the presence of four others of his comrades, at the same time showing it to them; but each of the four having also received a leg from the priest and promised the same secrecy, they inquired with astonishment "whether that ass had *five* legs?" By the way, they forgot that the latter would have been much less of a miracle than the former.

A Dutch schoolmaster in contempt of a shameless friar, who had expressed his dislike of the liberal arts and sciences, gave his school-boys this Latin for an exercise, *monachus*, a devil, *diabolus*, a friar.

The subject of *sacred relics* is inexhaustible, but we shall only add a few words. Spolatine, the celebrated secretary of Frederic, Elector of Saxony, drew up a curious catalogue of sacred relics preserved in the principal church at Wittemberg. It contained the enormous number of *nineteen thousand three hundred and seventy-four.* Previously to

* The Popish churches resounded with such petitions as the following:

"Maria, mater gratiæ
Tu nos ab hoste protege
In hora mortis suscipe,
et
Sancta Dorothea, *cor mundum in me crea!*
Sancta Catharina ab astu mundi transfer nos ad amæna
Paradisi! *aperi januas Paradisi!*"

MELANCTH. Declam. Tom. VI.

the more correct ideas of religion which he received from Luther, the Elector was a great collector of these rarities. But the relics in the churches of Hall were still more curious. These precious specimens of superstition are of very high antiquity. In the year 359, the Emperor Constantius caused the remains of St. Andrew and St. Luke to be removed to the temple of the Twelve Apostles at Constantinople, from which precedent the search for saints and martyrs, whose bodies were supposed to possess extraordinary virtues, became general. The wonder seems to be how a sufficient number could be procured, to serve even by piecemeal for so many ages and churches; but this apparent difficulty is solved by father John Ferand, who asserts, that "God was pleased to multiply and re-produce them for the devotion of the faithful." Instead of swelling the inventory to thousands, a specimen of a few may afford the reader some data by which to ascertain whether the probability is that they were multiplied by divine omnipotence, or by human credulity.

"The rod of Moses with which he performed his miracles.

"A feather of the angel Gabriel.

"A finger of a cherub.

"The slippers of the antediluvian Enoch.

"The spoon and pap dish of the Holy Child.

"A lock of hair of Mary Magdalene.

"A tear our Lord shed over Lazarus, preserved by an angel who gave it in a phial to Mary Magdalene.

"One of the coals that broiled St. Lawrence.

"The face of a seraph with only part of the nose.

"The snout of a seraph, supposed to belong to the defective face.

"Some of the rays of the star that appeared to the magi."

The bishop of Mentz, says Luther, boasted that he had A FLAME OF THE BUSH WHICH MOSES BEHELD BURNING!

The necessity of some reform of abuses, even the more enlightened Catholics themselves admitted, but they had no conception of the extent to which it was about to be carried, and which is worthy the most attentive consideration. Man usually employs great means to accomplish insignificant purposes; but God produces the greatest effects by the smallest apparent effort. Hence, there is a characteristic difference between divine and human methods of operation, which was never more remarkably conspicuous than in the history of the Reformation. Never, consequently, did any work exhibit more visible traces of a divine interposition.

When Leo X. took the Papal chair, he found the revenues of the church exhausted by the vast projects and ambitious enterprizes of his immediate predecessors, and not only was he naturally disinclined to economize, and liberal in his encouragement of the arts and learned men, but extremely desirous of aggrandizing the Medicean family, of maintaining a splendid establishment, and of contributing to the exterior magnificence of the Catholic church. Julius II. had granted indulgences to all who contributed to the building of the church of St. Peter at Rome, and under the same pretext Leo adopted a similar plan of obtaining money, "Pope Leo X.," says Sleidan, "making use of that power which his predecessors had usurped over all Christian churches, sent abroad into all kingdoms his letters and bulls, with ample promises of the full pardon of sins, and of eternal salvation to such as would purchase the same with money!"

It is obvious that the multiplication of crimes in a superstitious and dissolute age, would be proportionate to the facility of obtaining pardon. It had been a practice in the different governments of Europe, to allow the payment of a fine to the magistrate, by way of compounding for the punishment due to an offence. The avaricious and unprincipled court of Rome adopted a similar plan in religious concerns, and intent only on the augmentation of revenue, it even rejoiced in the degradation of the human mind and character. The officers of the Roman chancery published a book containing the exact sum to be paid for any particular sin. A deacon guilty of murder was absolved for twenty crowns. A bishop or abbot might assassinate for three hundred livres. An ecclesiastic might violate his vows of chastity even with the most aggravating circumstances for the third part of that sum. To these and similar items, it is added, "Take notice particularly that such graces and dispensations are not granted to the POOR, *for not having wherewith to pay they cannot be comforted.*" *Taxa Cancellar Romanæ.*

The origin of indulgences is to be traced to a time far antecedent to the period now under review. They were resorted to in the twelfth century for the purpose of private emolument, the bishops assuming to themselves this dispensing power, whenever they wanted money for their private pleasures, or for the exigencies of the church. They soon became a source of inexhaustible opulence, and the abbots and monks who did not possess the same authority, but quite as much avarice and craft, invented the counterpart of this plan by carrying about the relics of saints in solemn procession, and permitting the infatuated multitude to touch and kiss them for certain stipulated prices.

The Roman pontiffs soon interposed to *share* this profitable traffic of indulgences with the bishops, and at length to *appropriate* it to themselves. And with strange temerity they ventured not only to publish plenary remission for all temporal penalties, but for all the punishments predicted for transgressors in a future state of existence. The first pretence to justify this proceeding, was the holy war carried on by European princes against the infidels of Palestine, but this benefit was very soon extended to less important occasions.

The monstrous doctrine thus originated was modified and embellished by *Saint* Thomas in the following century, and contained these propositions, "that there existed an immense treasure of *merit*, composed of the pious deeds and virtuous actions which the saints had performed *beyond what was necessary for their own salvation*, and which were therefore applicable to the benefit of others: that the guardian and dispenser of this precious treasure was the Roman pontiff, and that of consequence he was empowered to assign to such as he thought proper a *portion* of this inexhaustible source of *merit*, suitable to their respective guilt, and sufficient to deliver them from the punishment due to their crimes."

In the pontificate of Leo X. Albert, Elector of Metz, and archbishop of Magdeburg, who was soon afterwards made a cardinal, had the commission for dispensing indulgences in Germany, and enjoyed a considerable share of the profits. His agent in Saxony was John Tetzel, a Dominican friar, a profligate in his morals, but a man of popular eloquence, and what was still better for the purpose, of most consummate effrontery. He carried on a very extensive traffic in indulgences, in consequence of offering them to the ignorant multitude at a very low price. He boasted that "he had saved more souls from hell by his indulgences, than St. Peter had converted to Christianity by his preaching." He affirmed, if any man purchased them, his soul may rest secure respecting its salvation—that the souls purchased, as soon as the mo-

ney tinkles in the chest, escape and ascend to heaven—and that the cross erected by the preachers of indulgences, was as efficacious as the cross of Christ itself. The usual form of absolution by Tetzel, was as follows, "May our Lord Jesus Christ have mercy upon thee, and absolve thee by the merits of his most holy passion. And I, by his authority, that of his blessed apostles Peter and Paul and of the most holy Pope, granted and committed to me in these parts, do absolve thee, first, from all ecclesiastical censures, in whatever manner they have been incurred, and then from all thy sins, transgressions and excesses, how enormous soever they may be, even from such as are reserved for the cognizance of the Holy See; and as far as the keys of the holy church extend, I remit to thee all punishment which thou deservest in purgatory on their account, and I restore thee to the holy sacraments of the church, to the unity of the faithful, and to that innocence and purity which thou didst possess at baptism; so that when thou diest the gates of punishment shall be shut, and the gates of the paradise of delights shall be opened, and if thou shalt not die at present, this grace shall remain in full force when thou art at the point of death. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

The audacious Tetzel was particularly successful in his impious traffic in the neighborhood of Wittemberg, a circumstance which roused the righteous spirit of Luther to a determined opposition. He declaimed both publicly and privately against the vices of the monks who published indulgences, and pointed out to the people from the pulpit, the danger of relying on any other means of salvation than those which God himself had appointed in his word. Luther was at that time about thirty-four years of age, and a professor of theology and philosophy in the University of Wittemberg. On the thirtieth of September, 1517, he maintained publicly at Wittemberg ninety-five propositions against indulgences, by which he opened the long and glorious campaign which eventually secured the rights of conscience, and established the cause of protestantism.

These propositions which were affixed to the church adjoining the castle of Wittemberg, were much welcomed, and obtained a wide and rapid circulation in Germany. The Augustinians, particularly the prior and sub-prior of the monastery, endeavored to dissuade Luther from thus exposing himself and his order to danger, but nothing could extinguish or abate his zeal. Tetzel soon afterwards published two theses against the Reformer at Frankfort, the former consisting of a hundred and six propositions, the latter of fifty, but all deduced from one general principle, as liberal and as enlightened as a Catholic commissioner of indulgences might be expected to assume, namely, the Pope's infallibility. As a further incontestible proof of victory over his opponent, he committed his writings to the flames. The students of the University at Wittemberg instantly resented the indignity, very much to the dissatisfaction of Luther, and totally without the knowledge of the elector, senate, or rector, by treating Tetzel's propositions in a similar manner. The controversy, however, was for a long period entirely of a private nature, and Luther himself relinquished his prejudices in favor of the hierarchy slowly and reluctantly. His letters to the Pope and the bishops were expressed in respectful, and even in submissive terms, for no one was less aware than himself of the great work he was employed by Providence to accomplish.

Some of his Augustinian brethren differed from Luther respecting several of his doctrines, which determined him to embrace the favorable opportunity of an annual meeting of the order at Heidelberg, in the summer of 1518, to publish and publicly defend his sentiments on justification, faith, good works, and other theological topics. The effect produced by this discussion was considerable, especially upon the minds of two persons afterwards distinguished in the annals of the Reformation, Martin Bucer and John Brentius.

In the course of the same year three powerful antagonists arose, Silvester, Prierio, master of the Apostolic palace at Rome, James Hoogstraat, an inquisitor of Louvain, and John Eckius, professor of divinity, and vice-chancellor at Ingolstadt. In his controversies with these dignified ecclesiastics, he displayed the most intrepid firmness of character, and an increasing knowledge of the truth. In reply to Prierio's extravagant representations of the Pope's power, and of his superiority to a general council, he exclaims, "If such are the sentiments entertained at Rome, happy are they who have separated from the church and are gone out from the midst of that Babylon! Cursed are they who hold communion with her! If the Pope and cardinals do not check this mouth of Satan and compel him to recant, I solemnly declare before them that I dissent from the Romish church, and renounce her with the Pope and cardinals as the abomination of the holy place."

Leo X. reclining upon the lap of sensuality and indolence, cheered by the beams of prosperity, and lulled by the echoes of parasitical adulation into luxurious repose, took no notice of the progress of opinion in Germany. He expected that the contentions which had arisen would cease of themselves, and like a few bubbles on the surface of a stream produced by some temporary and slight agitation of the waters would gradually, and without any interference, disappear. When Prierio referred to the heresies of Luther, he replied with the utmost indifference, *Che fra Martino aveva un bellissimo ingegno, et che coteste erano invidie fratesche.* "Martin is a man of talents, but these are only the squabbles of monks." The moment however the innumerable reports which he heard of the fatal divisions of Germany, and especially a letter from the Emperor Maximilian I. on the subject, convinced him of his mistake, he became infuriated, and acted with a precipitancy no less conducive than his previous indifference to the advantage of the reformed cause. He summoned Luther to appear before him at Rome within sixty days, to answer for his heresy in the presence of select judges, of whom Prierio was nominated as one.

Frederic, justly surnamed the *wise*, adopting the only measure that could have successfully averted the impending danger, represented to the pontiff that Luther's cause belonged exclusively to the jurisdiction of a German tribunal, and ought to be decided by the ecclesiastical laws of the empire. This induced the Pope to refer the case to Cardinal Cajetan, a Dominican, and his legate at that time at the diet of Augsberg. In a letter dated the eleventh of October, addressed to Melancthon from this place, which evinces at once the ardor of his friendship and the peculiarity of his situation, Luther thus expresses himself: "There is nothing, my dear Philip, new or remarkable here, unless it be that the whole city is full of the rumor of my name, and every one is desirous of seeing this new Erostratus, the incendiary. Persevere manfully in what you are doing for the right instruction of youth; for my part I am ready, if such be the will of God, to suffer any thing for you and for them. I would rather die, and lose for ever, what would indeed be a most painful privation, your delightful society, than recant any part of the truth I have spoken, or furnish those with an occasion of disparaging the

most important studies, who are both the silliest and the bitterest enemies of sound learning. Italy is plunged into the profoundest Egyptian darkness, all are ignorant of Christ and the things that are Christ's. Yet these are the lords and masters of our faith and morals! Thus the anger of God is evinced in the accomplishment of that prediction; 'I will give children to be their princes, and women shall rule over them.' Farewell, my dear Philip, and pray fervently that the divine displeasure may be averted."

Luther held three different conferences with the cardinal in the month of October, but to no purpose: after which Charles Miltitz, a Saxon knight belonging to the court of Leo, and well qualified for such a commission by prudence and sagacity, was sent to supercede Cajetan. For the double purpose of conciliating the Elector of Saxony, and avoiding the humiliating appearance of sending a messenger expressly to treat with Luther, the Pope sent the golden or consecrated Rose to Frederic, by Miltitz, which was an annual present to some distinguished favorite of the Court of Rome. It was received, however, with coldness, and even contempt.

At his first conference in the year 1519, at Altenburg, he succeeded so far as to persuade Luther to write a submissive letter to Rome, and after two other interviews great expectations were entertained of a speedy and complete reconciliation. Happily the inconsiderate violence of the Papal advocates defeated these hopes, and stimulated Luther and his followers to still greater diligence in the investigation of truth, and to increased activity in the propagation of it.

The origin and early progress of this extraordinary controversy, together with the motives which influenced the great *heresiarch* of the sixteenth century, are so admirably stated by Melancthon in his preface to the second volume of Luther's works, that the substance of it cannot with propriety be omitted in this narrative.

"Martin Luther gave us reason to hope, that in the preface to this part of his writings, he would furnish a narrative of his own life, and of the occasions of those contests in which he was engaged: and he would have done it, if, before this volume was printed he had not been called from this mortal life, to the eternal society of God and the heavenly church. A clear exposition of his private life, would have been peculiarly useful, for it abounded with profitable examples for the confirmation of the pious, and the admonition of posterity. It would also have refuted the calumnies of those who insinuate, that he was excited by princes or others to undermine the dignity of bishops, or that he was animated through the expectation of private gain to break the bonds of monastic servitude.

"The parents of Martin Luther, originally lived in the town of Eisleben, where Martin was born, and afterwards removed to Mansfeldt, in which place his father became a magistrate, and obtained the highest reputation for his integrity. His mother was remarkable for every virtue, and especially for the fear of God and a devotional spirit. They were peculiarly diligent in their daily instructions to educate their son in the knowledge and fear of God, and in a proper sense of every duty. Luther was placed under the tuition of a pious tutor at the school of Eisleben, and at the age of fourteen was removed to Magdeburg, along with John Reineck, who afterwards rose to considerable distinction, and with whom he formed a lasting friendship. In the course of a year he was sent to the school of Eisenach, where he applied to grammatical studies with the utmost diligence. He far surpassed his schoolfellows in talent, especially in eloquence and copiousness of language, both in prose and poetical compositions. Captivated with the love of literature he panted for academical instruction, and if he had met with suitable teachers, his capacity would have enabled him to go through all the sciences; nor is it improbable that the milder studies of a sound philosophy and a careful habit of elaborate composition, might have been useful in moderating the vehemence of his natural temper. But at Erfurt he was introduced to the thorny logic of the age, which his penetrating genius soon completely understood. Eager for knowledge he was not satisfied with this, but hastened to read Cicero, Virgil, Livy, and most of the Roman writers; whom he studied not as boys do for the sake of the words, but for instruction. He entered into the meaning and spirit of the authors, and as his memory was tenacious, almost every thing he read was ready for use. Thus, even in his early youth he excited the admiration of the whole university.

"Having taken the degree of master of arts at the age of twenty, his relations urged him to embrace the profession of the law, thinking that his genius and eloquence might be employed advantageously to the state, but he very soon disappointed their wishes by entering the Augustinian monastery at Erfurt. There he not only pursued ecclesiastical studies with the closest attention, but submitted to the severest discipline, and far surpassed others in the various exercises of reading, disputation, fasting, and prayer. As he was neither small in person nor feeble in constitution, I have been astonished at the small quantities of food he required, for I have known him when in perfect health, neither eat nor drink four days successively, and for a considerable length of time subsist on a slight allowance of bread and a herring, day after day.

"The occasion of his commencing that course of life, which he considered most suitable to piety and sacred learning, was this, as he related it himself, and as many know. When deeply meditating on the wonderful instances of divine wrath and judgment, he was frequently so alarmed, that he was ready to die with terror. I saw him once wrought up to such a pitch of feeling in the course of an argument on some doctrinal point, that he threw himself on a bed in a neighbor's chamber, and amidst the most fervent supplications, frequently exclaimed, 'he hath concluded all under sin, that he might have mercy upon all.'

"It was not poverty, therefore, but religion which induced him to seek a monastic life, in which though his proficiency in scholastic learning, and his skill in the inextricable labyrinths of disputation were remarkable, yet as he was rather in quest of solid improvement than of fame, he regarded these pursuits as only ornamental and subordinate. He eagerly resorted to the fountains of heavenly knowledge, that is, the writings of the prophets and apostles; that he might ascertain the will of God and have his faith established upon the firmest evidence. To this he was the more disposed, in consequence of those anxieties which preyed upon his mind.

"He used to relate that an elderly priest in the monastery at Erfurt, to whom he explained his feelings, consoled him by discoursing on the nature of faith, and directing his attention to the article in the creed, 'I believe in the remission of sins.' This he interpreted not merely as implying a general belief, for such a faith even devils possess, or a conviction that some persons of peculiar excellence as David or Peter are pardoned, but that it was the divine command that each individual should personally appropriate the doctrine. This interpretation he confirmed by a reference to St. Bernard, and to the language of St. Paul, 'We are justified by faith.' Luther was thus led to pay greater attention to the

doctrine of justification by faith, so much inculcated by Paul; and by the study of the different passages on this subject in the writings of the prophets and apostles, accompanied by daily prayer, he acquired increasing light.

"At that period he began to read the works of Augustine, where, particularly in his commentary on the Psalms and his book concerning the Spirit and the Letter, he found many decisive passages which confirmed his idea of faith and afforded him much consolation. Nor did he altogether relinquish the Sententiarii. He was studious of Occam, Gerson, and others, and some of their writings he could almost repeat by heart, but Augustine was his favorite author.

"Staupitz, who was anxious to promote theological studies in the recent academical establishment at Wittemberg, recommended Luther to a professorship in 1508, in the twenty-sixth year of his age. His genius was soon noticed in the daily exercises, especially by Martin Mellerstadius, who plainly predicted the mighty change he was likely hereafter to accomplish in the current doctrine of the schools.

"Here he expounded the logic and physics of Aristotle, but continued to pursue his theological studies. Some time afterwards he went to Rome to settle a dispute with the monks, and upon his return the degree of Doctor of Divinity was conferred upon him at the expense of the Elector Frederic, who had heard him preach and admired the force of his genius, his nervous language, and the excellent matter of his discourses.

"Afterwards he expounded the Psalms and the epistle to the Romans in such a luminous manner, that truth seemed to arise with new splendor after a long and cloudy night. He pointed out the distinction between the law and the gospel, he refuted the Pharisaical error at that time inculcated both in the schools and pulpit, that men may merit the remission of sin by their own works and become righteous before God. Thus he directed the minds of men to Jesus Christ, and like John the Baptist, pointed to the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world.

"This revival of important truth procured him a very extensive authority, especially as his conduct corresponded with his instructions, and these proceeded not merely from the lip, but from the heart. This purity of life produced a great effect upon the minds of his hearers, and the old proverb was verified. 'Virtue makes the speech persuasive.' Wherefore many worthy men influenced by the excellence of his doctrine and the sanctity of his character, were afterwards induced to comply with some of the changes which he introduced in certain established ceremonies.

"Not that Luther at that time meditated an innovation upon the customary observances, or broached any alarming opinions, but he was illustrating more and more the doctrines so essential to all, of repentance, the remission of sins, faith, and salvation by the cross of Christ. Every pious mind was charmed with these lovely truths, and the learned were pleased to see Christ, the prophets and apostles, brought as it were, out of darkness, mourning and imprisonment, and the differences between the law and the gospel, between philosophy and evangelical doctrine established, nothing of which was to be discerned in Thomas Aquinas, Scotus, and other scholastics. Add to this, the study of the Greek and Latin languages was promoted by the writings of Erasmus, and many persons of cultivated minds began to despise the barbarism of the schools. Luther himself studied Greek and Hebrew, that he might enjoy access to the fountains of sacred wisdom.

"Such was the course which Luther was diligently pursuing at the moment when the impudent Dominican Tetzel published his prostitute indulgences in these parts; and so irritated was Luther by Tetzel's impious discourses, and so inflamed with the love of pure religion, that he issued those propositions concerning indulgences which are inserted in his works. These he posted up in Wittemberg on the day of the feast of All Saints, in the year 1517. Tetzel, hoping to ingratiate himself into the favor of the Roman pontiff, immediately convoked his monks to assist him in writing against Luther. But this did not satisfy him. He thundered against Luther as a heretic, and publicly committed his propositions to the flames, threatening a similar fate to their author. This conduct compelled Luther to discuss the subjects of difference at greater length, in support of the truth.

"In this manner the great controversy commenced, when Luther did not in the least suspect or dream of the change about to be accomplished, nor indeed of even rooting out indulgences. It is therefore calumnious in those who say that he only made use of this affair as a plausible pretext to subvert the establishment, and to introduce himself and his friends into power. So far from this, the Elector Frederic in particular beheld these contentions with sorrow, and acted with extreme caution. Frederic was distinguished above all his contemporary princes as a lover of peace, neither stimulating nor even applauding Luther, and frequently expressing his apprehensions of future discords. But he was a wise man, by no means disposed to follow the advice of those who are for crushing every innovation in the bud, but rather regarding the admonitions of heaven, to listen to the gospel, and not resist the truth. He read the word of God for himself, and submitted to its authority. I know, too, that he often asked wise and good men to give their opinion; and particularly at Cologne, at the time of the coronation of Charles V. he affectionately urged Erasmus to speak freely on the subject of Luther and the existing controversies. To which Erasmus replied, 'Luther is right in his sentiments, but he wants more mildness.' Frederic took occasion afterwards to exhort him to moderate the asperity of his style.

"Luther promised Cardinal Cajetan to be silent, if silence were also imposed upon his adversaries; from which it is evident that he was at that time solicitous of peace, and not of contention: but he was provoked into disputation by illiterate writers, who obliged him to publish on the sacraments, on the distinction between divine and human laws, on vows, and other subjects. Eckius, for the purpose of rendering him hateful to the hierarchy, moved the question respecting the supremacy of the Roman see.

"Human policy detests change and innovation; and it must be confessed that, in the present unhappy state of mankind, there will always be a mixture of good and evil in the very best of causes: but in the church the command of God is paramount to all human authority. 'This,' says the eternal Father, 'is my beloved Son, HEAR YE HIM;' and he denounces eternal vengeance against those who impiously endeavor to abolish any part of revealed truth. Luther, therefore, was engaged in a work both of piety and necessity, especially as a teacher in the church of God, when he opposed pernicious errors. If innovation be odious, if the prevalence of discord be unpleasant and we cannot witness it without grief, be it remembered, the blame attaches to the promulgators and abettors of error.

"I state this not merely for the sake of defending Luther and his adherents, but that pious people now, and in future ages, may perceive what is, and always will be, the ruling principle in the true

church of God; and how God, by the word of the gospel, selects his eternal church from the great and corrupt mass of sinners, amongst whom his word shines as a light in a dark place. Thus, in the time of the prevalence of Pharisaical impiety, Zacharias, Elizabeth, Mary, and many others, preserved the purity of truth; and previous to that age there were many who saw, with greater or less degrees of clearness, the genuine gospel, and worshipped the true God. Such an one was that aged priest I have mentioned, who encouraged Luther amidst his conscientious convictions and struggles, and was in some respects his teacher in the faith. Let us then join in the fervent supplication of Isaiah for his hearers, 'Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples.' Isaiah 8: 16. This statement will tend to show that base superstitions cannot last for ever, and will explain the causes of religious innovation.

"No private ambition induced Luther to undertake this cause at first; and though he was naturally ardent and passionate, yet he was always mindful of his peculiar department; and, discriminating wisely between the office of a magistrate who wields the sword to govern the multitude, and that of a Christian preacher who is to instruct the church of God, he disclaimed the use of arms or coercive measures. When Satan, who perpetually aims to disgrace the cause and subvert the church of God through the errors of miserable men, excited several seditious characters to tumultuous irregularities, he condemned them in the severest manner, and both adorned by his example, and strengthened by his eloquence, the bonds of social order. But when I reflect on this subject, and consider how many great men in the church have committed sad mistakes in this point, I do affirm that no human care, but a divine principle alone, could have sufficed to keep him so constantly within the limits of duty.

"He constantly exhorted every one to 'render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and to God the things which are God's;' that is, to worship God in the exercise of genuine repentance, in an open avowal of the truth, in prayer and in a conscientious discharge of duty; and in the fear of God to regard all the civil regulations of the community. Such was Luther. He gave to God the things which are God's, he taught the truth, and prayed aright, and possessed all those virtues which are well pleasing to God; and, as a citizen, he shunned every thing seditious. Virtues greater than these cannot, I think, be desired in the present life.

"But though we extol the excellencies of the man, and the use he made of the gifts of heaven, yet we ought to feel peculiar gratitude to God, who, by his means, restored the true light of the gospel, which we should preserve and diffuse. It is this doctrine of which the Son of God says, 'If any man love me he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him.'"

The celebrated disputation at Leipsic claims some notice, both on account of its early occurrence in this great polemical campaign, and of Melancthon's concern with it. It lasted from the twenty-seventh of June to the fifteenth of July. Carolostadius, or Carlostadt, professor of divinity at Wittemberg, archdeacon of the church of All Saints in that place, and a zealous reformer, and Eckius of Ingoldstadt, the papal advocate, after some preliminary pamphleteering, agreed upon settling the controversy, according to the fashion of the age, by a public debate. George, Duke of Saxony, uncle of the Elector, offered the city of Leipsic for the purpose, expecting, no less than Eckius himself, a triumphant issue to the Catholic cause. Thither the combatants repaired on the eighth of June, Luther and Melancthon accompanying their friend. The assembly was splendid. The Duke of Saxony, the members of his council, the Magistrates of Leipsic, the Doctors and Bachelors of the University, with a number of persons of quality, were present; and scribes were appointed to take notes of the debate. It is a curious circumstance that John Agricola, of Eisleben, who was employed on the Lutheran side, was afterwards an opponent of the Reformation, and John Poliander, who was amanuensis to Eckius, attached himself to Luther at the close of the disputation, and afterwards became a preacher of the gospel in Prussia.

The first six days' discussion between Eckius and Carlostadt, on the subject of free-will, was conducted with considerable skill by both parties; but it would be very uninteresting to detail. It is sufficient to state that the principal question was—"Whether the human will had any operation in the performance of good works, or whether it was merely passive to the power of divine grace?" Eckius maintained that the will co-operated with the grace of God, and Carlostadt asserted its total inefficacy to perform any meritorious act. Melancthon, who was a hearer, says, it first gave him a practical demonstration of what the ancients understood by *sophistry*. Eckius undoubtedly acquired the greatest share of popularity, from the superior ease and fluency he discovered compared with his antagonist. Luther soon afterwards obtained the Duke's permission to take the place of Carlostadt in the debate, at the particular request of Eckius, who was impatient to encounter the leading Reformer. Each was in truth equally ardent, conscious that a mighty cause was at stake, which demanded the whole force of their respective energies of mind. On the one side was Eckius, impelled by no small degree of confidence in himself from previous conflicts, especially the recent one with Carlostadt, supported by the plaudits of the Catholic party, which was the prevalent one in point of numbers and splendor, and having acquired a very high degree of celebrity, for Eckius, had already engaged in public disputations in eight different Universities—on the other, Luther, persecuted and defamed, conscious that if he betrayed the least feebleness in argument, or the smallest degree of forgetfulness or hesitation, it would be taken advantage of by his wily adversaries, and thus prove detrimental to the important cause he advocated; and that even though he should be completely triumphant in argument, it would rather tend to irritate than convince or silence his opponents. Never was a more important crisis—never a greater cause—never more determined more equal, or more impetuous antagonists:

> ——— As when two black clouds,
> With heav'n's artillery fraught, come rattling on
> Over the Caspian, then stand front to front,
> Hovering a space, till winds the signal blow
> To join their dark encounter in mid air—
> So FROWN'D THE MIGHTY COMBATANTS.
>
> *Milton's Par. Lost, B. 2.*

Eckius selected thirteen propositions from the works of Luther, as the subjects of "long debate;" but the principal one that engaged their attention was the foundation of the supremacy claimed by the Roman Pontiffs. After ten days of violent and incessant discussion, in which Eckius was obliged to admit the eminent "attainments of his reverend opponent," and even to apologize for himself, the victory was claimed by both parties. Luther says he must acknowledge that he and his friends were overcome—"*clamore et gestu*," by noise and gesture. Hoffman, the rector of the university of

Leipsic, refused to give a decision in favor of either; in consequence of which it was referred to the universities of Paris and Erfurt, who neglected, though they did not refuse to do it. The immediate effect of this dispute upon Eckius, was that of increasing his animosity against the Reformer, on whom he determined to revenge himself in every possible way. Luther considers it as some good evidence that the duke felt the force of his arguments, because on one of these controversial days when they were dining together, he laid his hands on the shoulders of the two combatants and exclaimed, "Whether the Pope exists by divine or by human right, he is, however, the Pope!"

If we may judge by the letter of Eckius himself to his friend Hoogstraat, it will not be difficult to ascertain the victorious party. He complains that the Lutherans had great advantages over him, because they brought several books to which they had recourse, they had their disputation in writing and conferred together about an answer, and they were many against one single man. It is no inconsiderable circumstance also, that a large number of the young students immediately quitted Leipsic and repaired to the university of Wittemberg.

Though Melancthon had undoubtedly favored the designs, and aided the efforts of Luther previously to this conference, he was roused by the present occasion to a more particular study of the points of difference, and a more vigorous co-operation with the great champion of religious liberty. He had an opportunity of hearing whatever one of the most zealous, eloquent, and able advocates of Popery could say in defence of his system, of perceiving the influence of that system upon the minds of men in general, and of estimating more correctly perhaps than under any other circumstances he could have done the great importance of the controversy itself. "From the period of this famous public disputation, he applied himself more intensely to the interpretation of the Scriptures and the defence of pure Christian doctrine, and he is justly esteemed by Protestants to have been under divine Providence, the most powerful coadjutor of the Saxon Reformer. His mild and peaceable temper, his aversion to schismatic contention, his reputation for piety and for knowledge, and above all, his happy art of exposing error and maintaining truth in the most perspicuous language, all these endowments concurred to render him eminently serviceable to the revival of the religion of Christ. Little did Eckius imagine that the public disputation in which he had foreseen nothing but victory and exultation, and the downfall of Lutheranism would give rise to another theological champion, who should contend for Christian truth and Christian liberty, with the primitive spirit of an apostle. At Wittemberg, Melancthon had probably been well acquainted with Luther's lectures on divinity; but it was in the citadel of Leipsic, that he heard the Romish tenets defended by all the arguments that ingenuity could devise; there his suspicions were strengthened respecting the evils of the existing hierarchy; and there his righteous spirit was roused to imitate, in the grand object of his future inquiries and exertions, the indefatigable endeavors of his zealous and adventurous friend."—*Milner's History, Vol. 4, page 428.*

Melancthon represents himself as only a spectator and hearer of this celebrated dispute, but he took the most lively interest in every part of the proceedings, and several writers have stated that he often went up to Carlostadt and whispered so many useful suggestions, that Eckius was provoked to exclaim: "*Tace tu Philippe, ac tua studia cura, nec me perturba;*" "Hold your tongue Philip, mind your own business, and do not interfere with me." His opinion of the different disputants is given in a letter to a friend, and may be relied on for candor and accuracy. "Eckius was much admired for his various and striking ingenuities. You know Carlostadt, he is certainly a man of worth and of extraordinary erudition. As to Luther, whom I have known most intimately, his lively genius, his learning and eloquence I admire, and it is impossible not to be in love with his truly sincere and pure Christian spirit." It is difficult to ascertain how Eckius procured a copy of this letter, which also contained a general account of the transactions at Leipsic, but he instantly published a most acrimonious reply, calling Melancthon a mere grammarian, and with preposterous self-sufficiency affirming, that, "although he might have some knowledge of Greek and Latin," yet "he was not a person with whom a divine could with propriety condescend to enter the lists." Nothing can be inferred from this contemptuous language, excepting the violent malignity of his temper, and the secret consciousness he felt of the talents of his opponent.

Melancthon replied, in a tract consisting of only five folio pages, but written with so much mildness, elegance, and acuteness, that it proved extremely serviceable to the Lutheran cause. To railing he opposes argument, to arrogance modesty, to dogmatism, sound sense and genuine piety. He contends without virulence, and triumphs without parade. Some of the sentiments are so excellent, and the manner in which they are expressed so truly characteristic, that they ought not to be suppressed.

After remarking that "in the epistle which had excited so much indignation, he had merely intended a slight sketch rather than a full description of the Leipsic disputations, for to have done otherwise would have required more time than his numerous occupations admitted;" he solemnly disavows "ever having intentionally given offence to any one, deeming it both unchristian and inhuman to injure or detract from another's merit. If he had done wrong, he wished it to be imputed either to incaution or accident, and begged to be forgiven, conscious as he was of being totally devoid of any malignity, and forced as he felt himself into this unwelcome arena of contention. He was resolved to be deaf to the calumnies of Eckius, appealing to what he had himself written for his best justification, and he would now conduct his argument without uttering any petulant or unjustifiable reproach against his antagonist, because he was more solicitous for the glory of Christ than respecting the effect which any frivolous calumnies might produce."

"Eckius," says he, "is confident of being victorious, by appealing to the authority of the holy fathers of the church. But how does this avail him? I am, indeed, by no means disposed to depreciate, on the contrary, I highly reverence those illustrious luminaries of the church and defenders of Christian doctrine. But I cannot deem it rash, as the fathers differ in their sentiments, to receive the Scripture, and not the varying opinions of men as the ultimate appeal. As there is always some one simple meaning to the language of Scripture, for divine truth is most intelligibly simple, this sense is to be sought by a comparison of passages, and by the general strain of the particular discourse. In this manner we are enjoined to investigate the sacred writings, as we examine the sentiments and decrees of men, by bringing them to the touchstone and trying their consistency. Then it is more satisfactory to consult their judgment on the meaning of Scripture, from those places where they professedly explained it, rather than where they are only indulging their own feelings in rhetorical descriptions. We all experience this fact, that Scripture is variously interpreted according to our various

dispositions of mind and cast of opinion. This or that interpretation pleases, because it seizes our feelings and captivates our passions, and as the polypus imitates the color of the rock to which it fixes, so we are prone to use our utmost endeavors to conform our sentiments to the prejudices of our own minds. It frequently happens that the mind may admit, and for a time be wonderfully charmed with the genuine force and propriety of a sentiment, but afterwards be incapable of reviving such an impression; and thus the fathers of the church, wrought up to a pitch of feeling, make use of Scripture in a sense not in itself bad, but sometimes inapplicable and foreign to the purpose. And though I do not totally condemn this, yet I think it cannot be of much avail in controversy, for according to the Greek adage, 'They run well, but then they do not keep in the course.' I dare affirm, that sometimes the fathers have given interpretations of Scripture, suggested perhaps in a state of high religious feeling, and which might not be erroneous, but which to us inferior men and in a less glowing state of mind, have not seemed to accord with the literal sense. There is a secret manna and food of the soul, to which Paul alludes, when he speaks of *spiritually discerning* it, which is more easily felt than described.

"But who does not perceive how often the Scriptures have been misapplied in the different controversies that have been agitated at various periods, of which innumerable examples might be adduced, so that it has frequently happened, especially of late, that their exposition has been at complete variance with the original text. As to the scholastic method of interpretation it is any thing but simple, a very Proteus, transforming the sense of Scripture into allegories, tropes, figures, and diverting the truth from its literal, grammatical, or historical meaning, into I know not what wretched and polluted channels."

After touching upon the various points of difference, he concludes by saying, "Eckius himself shall be witness if I have not avoided those invidious reflections, which had I been so inclined, might have been indulged." In writing to his friends, he uniformly breathes the same admirable spirit. "If," says he, "you perceive any thing of an antichristian nature in what I send, let me beg you to perform the duty of a genuine friend, admonish me instantly, reprove, yea, lash me as you please. He is, believe me, the dearest of all my friends, who is most honest and downright in his remarks, for you know, as it is not my disposition to dissemble, so I always look upon *flattering friends* as they deserve. But as genuine Christian affection neither flatters nor admits of flattery, so you will acquire the character of a friend with me, by being a faithful adviser. Eckius rages against us in the most coarse and violent manner, either from a natural impetuosity of disposition or because he considers himself aggrieved, and my purpose is not to inflict, but to compensate for any supposed injury. He is undoubtedly very severe; but I have replied only in a small publication, and with as much moderation as possible, for God is my witness, that I do not cherish the slightest animosity. I might have said more, perhaps, without transgressing the bounds of propriety, but I chose to refrain in order to write not what my adversary deserved, but what was worthy of our own character and cause. After our departure from Leipsic, Eckius certainly reviled Luther in the most outrageous manner."

Such was the temper of this amiable controversialist, who so well understood the wide difference between opprobrious epithets and solid arguments, and who it is obvious on every occasion sought *truth* rather than *victory*. He abhorred the field of strife, and hated Discord as an unnatural and ferocious demon. He valued peace as it ought to be valued, above gold and silver—above honors and empires. He was more anxious to do good than to shine, to carry the olive branch than to wield the sword, to be regarded, or—for such was the temper of the times—to be *despised*, as an humble peacemaker, than to be blazoned forth as a polemical hero!

Still let it be recollected, and in this sentiment Melancthon would have concurred, that we ought not so much to lament that controversies have arisen, as that they have been conducted in an antichristian spirit. Nothing, it is readily admitted, can be more detrimental to the interests of genuine religion than intemperate and ill-humored debatings, but on the other hand—open, fair, and candid discussion is calculated to promote good will, to pacify resentments, to smooth the wrinkled brow of bigotry, to dissipate doubts, to clear up difficulties, and to elucidate truth. Melancthon may be exhibited as a bright example to all controversial writers of the spirit in which their arguments should be conducted—or rather, let them be induced to imitate a greater than he, who, "WHEN HE WAS REVILED, REVILED NOT AGAIN!"

CHAPTER IV.

Melancthon's marriage—His domestic character—His exemplary virtues—His boundless liberality—Account of his favorite servant John—Epitaph on his tombstone—Candor of Melancthon—His meekness—Sympathy—Interesting Letter written to a friend, who had sustained a painful family bereavement—His Piety—Sincerity—Wit—Memory—Temperance—Modesty—Humility—Parental conduct—His value for Time—Marriage and settlement of his two daughters—Character of his sons-in-law, George Sabinus and Caspar Peucer—Notice of Thurzo, Bishop of Breslaw. 1520.

ALTHOUGH from the peculiarity of circumstances which surrounded Melancthon, and the important period in which he lived, we are naturally anxious to trace his public career, and follow him through the principal scenes of an active life, yet in order to accomplish the legitimate purposes of biography, it will be proper to turn aside for a moment to visit him in the recesses of privacy, by this means aiming to impart various instruction, as well as to prepare amusement.

Few persons can claim to rank amongst distinguished scholars or professors, and fewer still are destined by Providence to undergo the struggles, to encounter the resistance, and to pursue the high and holy course of Reformers; but every one occupies a place and possesses an influence in the FAMILY One or other of the endearing names of father, husband, parent, child, brother, sister, friend, belongs to every human being; to these different relations peculiar and appropriate duties are attached, and from the manner in which they are discharged or neglected, we have an opportunity both of noticing the development of individual character, and of ascertaining the principle upon which the felicity or infelicity of life in a very considerable degree depends. Here we have all the advantage of *example*, arising from the interesting consideration that another is acting in our own circumstances, and moving in a similar sphere; and if our personal improvement be not promoted, whether the example be good or bad, we must be strangely deficient in right feeling.

The chief actors in seasons of great political change or great moral revolution, are unfavorably situated for the cultivation of the milder graces; by the collision of opposing parties and contradictory opinions, the sparks of intemperate anger are too apt to be struck out, and dispositions even naturally mild, have sometimes been inflamed. But in cases where it has been deemed necessary or prudent for the sake of the cause, to suppress the rising emo-

tions of resentment, and to check improper violence of language in public, the rage of the heart has burst forth in the circle of unrestrained friendship, and disturbed the hour of private intercourse.—Here, however, the character of Melancthon is particularly worthy of admiration. A meek and quiet spirit never forsook him. He always engaged reluctantly in disputation, and was never or seldom irritated by it, even in the smallest degree. He harbored no resentments. When he retired from the field of strife, he laid aside his weapons and most willingly renounced the glory of the controversialist, for the peace and comfort of the domestic man. He did not bring malevolent feelings or angry passions into his family, for in truth he had none to bring. But it would be doing him great injustice to represent him as a tame or effeminate character. Passions he had, but they were under the due regulation of reason and piety. Religion had completed the work of nature; he was kind and gentle upon principle, as well as by constitution. If the emotions of anger at any time arose in his mind, they were instantly suppressed as a weakness unworthy of a man, as a sin unbecoming a Christian.

In the year 1520, he married a very respectable young lady belonging to one of the principal families in Wittemberg. Her name was Catharine Crappin, and her father was a burgomaster of the town. She is described by Camerarius, whose intercourse with the family was such as to afford him every means of correct information, as a truly religious person, most assiduously attentive to her domestic concerns, extremely liberal to all, and not only benevolent to the poor, and even lavish of her own means of supplying them, but urgent with others whom she could at any time influence to minister to their necessities. With eminent piety of spirit she united great purity of manners, and avoided all extravagance in dress and all luxury in food. Nothing could be more congenial to the taste of Melancthon, who was never captivated by the blandishments of pleasure, nor seduced by the charms of sensuality. In a letter to Langius, dated in November, he speaks of her in terms of high regard, as possessed of a disposition and manners which entirely corresponded with his wishes: and he represents his marriage as the result of serious deliberation, and conformable to the advice of his friends. Seldom have two individuals become more completely one in spirit and character, and seldom has the marriage contract been more firmly sealed by mutual attachment. Reason, religion, and love, presided over their happy union, and confirmed their solemn vows.

During this year he commenced a course of lectures on the epistle of Paul to the Romans, and so indefatigable was he in the regular discharge of this and every other academical duty, that the suspension of the usual course even for the single day of his marriage was so remarkable, as to be publicly intimated in the following curious notice:

> A studiis hodie facit ocia grata Philippus
> Nec vobis Pauli dogmata sacra leget.
>
> Rest from your studies, Philip says you may,
> He'll read no lectures on St. Paul to day.

Liberality was a distinguishing feature in the mind of Melancthon and his excellent wife; and this was apparent both in the common acts of charity and in the more diffusive spirit of universal benevolence. Neither of them was disposed by oppressive exactions or parsimonious care to enrich themselves. They deeply sympathized with the feelings of the needy and the wretched; never being deaf to their importunities, but readily and most liberally supplying them with money and sustenance. The necessitous might have applied to them with the utmost propriety, the language of Paul to the Corinthian church, "To their power, yea, and beyond their power, I bear record, they were willing of themselves, praying us with much entreaty, that we would receive the gift."—2 *Corinthians*, viii. 3, 4. Their house was crowded with a constant succession of comers and goers of every age, sex, and condition, some pressing in to receive, and others departing well stored from this ample repository of kindness and bounty. It formed a part of their domestic regulations, never to refuse an applicant!

In addition to those who frequented the house to beg, the celebrity of Melancthon proved a severe tax upon his time, for multitudes resorted to him to seek his advice, to obtain recommendatory letters, to request the correction of their compositions, to lay before him various complaints, to solicit his aid in literary pursuits, or perhaps merely for the purpose of seeing so distinguished a person; all of whom enjoyed free access. Sometimes persons whom he could not altogether approve would solicit his valuable recommendations; these he has been known to dismiss with pecuniary presents, as the best method which his benevolent spirit could devise, of being released from their unwelcome importunity.

It seems scarcely possible to conceive how amidst such a profusion of benevolence Melancthon could support his own family, especially when it is recollected, that while none were sent empty away, he not only did not aim to grow richer, but frequently refused those emoluments which others usually grasp at with the utmost eagerness. Instead of availing himself of the influence of the great with whom he was connected to advance him to dignity and opulence, he was known to refuse even the presents of princes. With an admirable disinterestedness, he lectured on divinity and the Holy Scriptures, two whole years without any salary; and when a pension of two hundred florins was assigned him by the Elector of Saxony, he excused himself by saying, "I am unable to devote myself to the duty with sufficient attention and assiduity to warrant an acceptance of it." The Elector, however, by Luther's advice, intimated that it would suffice to give one or two lectures in a week, as his health might permit.

At the time which will be hereafter more particularly noticed, when the Elector Maurice was desirous of attaching Melancthon to his interests, he made inquiry into his circumstances, and whether he was not in need of some pecuniary aid. Upon his dissembling this, the prince told him, he wished he would at least ask some favor, assuring him that whatever it might be, it should readily be granted. He replied, that "he felt perfectly satisfied with his salary, and was not anxious for any augmentation of it, or indeed for any thing else." Maurice still continued to urge him, and at length he said, "Well, as your highness requires me to ask some favor, I ask *my dismission*." The prince found it necessary, however, to solicit his continuance in his professorship, remarking to the gentlemen of his court, "That he had never seen nor experienced any thing like Melancthon's conduct, who was not only too disinterested to ask for any thing, but would not even accept it when proffered."

It is proper to mention, with marked respect, an invaluable servant, of the name of John, who lived with him many years. John was a man of tried honesty and fidelity, adorning the humble sphere in which he moved, and very much beloved by his master. To his management we must in part look for an explanation of the mystery to which we have alluded, namely, the possibility of being so lavishly

benevolent with such restricted and apparently inadequate means. The whole duty of provisioning the family was entrusted to this domestic, whose care, assiduity and prudence, amply justified the unbounded confidence reposed in him. He made the concerns of the family his own, avoiding all useless expenditure and watching with a jealous eye over his master's property. He was also the first instructor of the children in the family during their infancy. This merits to be distinctly recorded, not only because such a servant is a kind of *rara avis in terris*, but because, as in the present instance, he may contribute essentially to the general good, by preventing the waste of those means which a benevolent spirit will ever feel anxious to consecrate to purposes of public utility. John grew old in his master's service, and in the year 1553, expired in his house, after the long residence of almost thirty-four years, amidst the affectionate regrets of the whole family. Melancthon invited the academicians to his funeral, delivered an oration over his grave, and composed the following epitaph for his tombstone:

Joannes patrii Nicri discessit ab undis
Huc accersitus voce, Philippe, tua
Quem comes exilii juvit precibusque fideque
Nam vere gnato credidit ille DEI.
Ipsius hic dominus sepelivit corpus inane
Vivit, conspectu mens fruiturque DEI.

Here at a distance from his native land,
Came faithful John, at Philip's first command;
Companion of his exile, doubly dear,
Who in a servant found a friend sincere—
And more than friend, a man of faith and prayer,
Assiduous soother of his master's care;—
Here to the worms his lifeless body's given,
But his immortal soul sees God in heaven.

Perhaps no one ever attended more scrupulously than Melancthon to the injunction of Jesus Christ, "When thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth; that thy alms may be in secret."—*Matthew* vi 3. He was unostentatious in every thing, but especially in works of charity. Satisfied with the approbation of conscience and of God, he manifested no solicitude for the applause of men, and was content to do good without being praised for it. It will be easy to believe, that he abounded in acts of kindness which, being known only to himself, no book records excepting the register of heaven; especially when it is stated from unquestionable authority that, on several occasions when his pecuniary resources have been completely exhausted, he would contrive to supply the necessitous by privately taking cups and other vessels appropriated to domestic use, to a trader to sell, even at a very low and disadvantageous rate.

Melancthon received many presents of gold and silver coin. These he would often give to the very first person, who from avarice or curiosity might be induced to ask for them; not from any undervaluation of these ancient specimens, but simply from a disposition to oblige. Mere self-gratification appears seldom to have entered into his views, much less did such a feeling acquire any degree of ascendency over him. His prevailing desire was to communicate pleasure to others and he was satisfied with the feast, the intellectual and moral feast which a refined benevolence only can provide; in which respect, it must be acknowledged, that in a very important sense "he fared sumptuously every day."—*Luke* xvi. 19. On one remarkable occasion when he had accumulated a large collection of coins and curiosities, he offered a certain stranger who seemed peculiarly gratified with the sight, to take any one which he might happen to feel a wish to possess; upon which, the stranger said, with consummate effrontery, "I have a particular wish for them all." Melancthon, though he did not dissemble his displeasure, nevertheless granted his unwarrantable request.

If the parsimonious or the prudent should be disposed to censure this excessive and prodigal benevolence, alleging that if it be capable to "withhold more than is meet," (*Proverbs* xi. 24.) it is at least not very laudable to squander the gifts of Providence indiscriminately upon every class of importunate beggars; be it remembered, that there is an essential difference between an obvious crime and an apparent excess of virtue—between the conduct of the spendthrift and that of the person who is lavishly bountiful. In the one you perceive the very essence of selfishness, in the other the exuberance of kindness. The one lives only to seek his own gratification; *self* is the end he pursues, and the contemptible idol he worships; no sacrifices are considered too costly to be offered to this paltry god, and every thing is rendered subservient to this infamous idolatry; the other, considering himself in some degree the depository and trustee of the divine beneficence, and valuing the possessions of life only so far as they provide for his own immediate necessities, and may be made to contribute to the comfort of others, becomes at least serviceable to a number of his fellow creatures. He feels the claims of humanity, and fulfils the high duties of a neighbor. If such a person be a little more liberal in distributing than the narrow calculations of human policy or prudence seem to admit, he acts in conformity with the dictates of a pure and disinterested benevolence, reaps a rich harvest of satisfaction, and manifests the spirit while he fulfils the precepts of the Saviour of the world.

If it be alleged that it is no one's duty to impoverish himself or to injure his family, even though it be the result not of a selfish but a benevolent expenditure, this is conceded—yet in the present case, the question does not respect the waste of property *already possessed*, but the neglect to *accumulate*. If an individual be satisfied for himself with that station of life which Providence has assigned him, and with those pecuniary resources, small or great, which he already possesses, and if he prefer using that supply which industry, manual or mental, procures for him, in doing good to others, instead of aspiring after the greater honors or emoluments within his power—if he choose even to *refuse them when offered*, either from an apprehension of moral danger or from mere indifference, will any one represent this as culpable? Surely we ought rather to admire than to censure such conduct; it evinces a noble spirit of disinterestedness, and a glorious superiority of mind to the attractions of earthly splendor, which is worthy of imitation.

In this statement of some of the excellent qualities of Melancthon, his extreme *candor* and *kindness* must not be overlooked. He was never known to asperse any one, either openly or by insinuation. Nothing was further from his intentions than to injure another's character or reputation, and if his were attacked, no one could manifest a more exemplary patience. He not only could not be moved to resentment by the misconduct of offenders, but did not relax in his benevolence or familiarity with them. No dark suspicions pervaded his mind, no malevolence or envy disturbed his placid spirit. The calm summer of his soul was never beclouded or distracted with tempestuous passions.

Sympathy with the sufferings of others was not among the least of his eminent qualities, of which, perhaps, the best possible illustration will be afforded by translating one of his letters to an afflicted friend, whose sorrow for the loss of a beloved child,

the moment he heard it, he hastened to alleviate. His sentiments are to be regarded as those of the heart, and not as the mere effusions of a formal or complimentary friendship. An affectionate disposition may, and indeed will, by a generous participation, share another's woes, even though it has not yet tasted the bitterness of bereavement or personal affliction of any kind; but in order to afford effectual consolation to the mourner, it seems requisite that the person whose friendly spirit hastens to his relief, should have been himself a sufferer, that he may be duly qualified to select appropriate language, and that the distressed individual himself may feel a consciousness that his words are not words of course. Experience is the best of all instructors, and affliction superinduces a sensibility, and teaches a language which cannot possibly be attained in any degree of perfection by another process. And, "As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man." Proverbs xxvii. 19. In this view Melancthon was likely to prove a judicious as well as a sympathizing friend, for during the whole of his life he drank deeply and drank often, of the bitter cup. The following letter besides claims insertion for its excellence, and as it is without date may be introduced here with propriety.

"To John Pfeffinger, with affectionate salutations.

"God has implanted the principle of natural affection in mankind, for the double purpose of strengthening the bonds of human society, and teaching us to realize the ardor of his love to his own Son and to us. He therefore approves the affection we cherish for our offspring, and the piety of our grief for their loss. Natural affection is peculiarly forcible in minds of a superior order; on which account, I doubt not, that the loss of your son—a son too not only possessed of the most amiable disposition, but of a mind well stored with literature, not only inclined by his very constitution to moral habits, but under the constant influence of true religion, and already engaged in a course of study in which his capacity promised so much—the loss of such a son, I say, must affect you with the deepest grief. And be assured, I am not disposed to accuse you of weakness, on the contrary, I acknowledge—I commend your piety—I truly lament your personal bereavement and the public loss; for I am apprehensive that in these times the churches will feel the want of teachers properly instructed. But you are well aware that we are permitted to mourn, though not immoderately. It is certain that these events are under divine superintendence; it becomes us therefore, to manifest a due submission of mind to God, and quietly to resign ourselves to his disposal in every season of adversity.

I will not now advert to the physical causes of death, for though naturally exposed to various diseases, let us regard the will of God in this dispensation, and not so much our own loss; and let us realize the blessings which in being removed from this afflictive life and these calamitous times your son is called to share. If we truly loved him, we shall rejoice in his happiness; and if we rightly understand Christian truth, we shall be disposed to congratulate him upon the society of the heavenly assembly, where he no longer drinks the streams of knowledge mingled and polluted as they are in the present world, but enjoys free access to the pure and infinite fountain of wisdom, holds intercourse with the Son of God himself, the prophets and apostles, and with inexpressible delight joins in praising God for so early an admission to that illustrious assembly; the thought of which may well enkindle within us a desire to escape from our earthly imprisonment.

"Perhaps it increases your sorrow to recollect his capacity, his erudition, his virtue; and you fondly wish for the charming company of such a son. But these very excellencies themselves ought to diminish your regrets, because you know how they contributed to the good of many during the short period of his mortal race, so that he was not a useless incumbrance upon society. You witnessed the evidences of his growing piety in this world of trial, which were but the beginnings of celestial life, and proved that his departure hence was only a removal to the happy intercourse of heaven. In fact, as often as you reflect upon these qualities of your dear son, you have reason to be thankful to God, who has shown such kindness both to you and to him, as to confer upon him the greatest of all favors: for a grateful mind will record mercies as well as crosses.

"It is becoming, therefore, as you know, to be resigned to the will of God who requires us to moderate our griefs, and to believe that no real evil has befallen your son. Let these considerations afford you comfort and repress undue anxiety. The minds of men are naturally influenced by examples, for it seems proper that we should not refuse to endure the afflictions incident to others, and which must be sustained as the common law of our nature. How calamitous must the death of Abel have appeared to our first parents, by the murder of whom their future hopes in reference to the church seemed to be cut off in regard to their own family, and how much greater cause for sorrow attached to them, when the human race consisted of so small a number, than can belong to you, who possess a surviving family, in which distinct evidences of piety may be traced? They were doubly wounded by the death of one son, and still more by the wickedness of his impious brother.

"Innumerable instances might be adduced from the history of all ages. Recollect the old Bishop of Antioch, whose three sons were slain by the tyrant Decius, in the very presence of their parents, who not only witnessed his cruel conduct, but exhorted and encouraged their children to suffer; after which, their mother beheld the murder of her husband, and having embraced the cold remains of her children and her husband, solemnly committed them to the grave.

"You remember also, the history of the Emperor Mauritius, who stood a silent spectator while his son and daughter were slain, but when the murderer approached his wife, he exclaimed, amidst a flood of tears, "Righteous art thou O Lord, and upright are thy judgments." Psalm cxix. 137.

"Wise men have often inquired with astonishment, for what reason the feeble nature of man is oppressed with such a weight of afflictions; but we who can trace the causes to a divine origin, ought to be resigned to the appointments of God, and avail ourselves of those remedies for grief which divine goodness has revealed: and while these are your solace, reflect upon this bright example of domestic piety.

"If when you are absent for a season from your family, and placed at a distance amongst persons uncongenial to your taste, the hope of returning home alleviates your vexations; so now you may be stimulated to patience by the consideration that in a little time you will again embrace your son in the delightful assembly of the skies, adorned with a more splendid distinction than any station on earth can command, I mean, with the glory of God, and placed among prophets, apostles, and the shining hosts of heaven, there to live for ever, enjoying the vision of God, and the enrapturing intercourse of Christ himself, the holy apostles and prophets. Let us constantly look forward to this glorious eternity

during the whole of our troublesome pilgrimage as to the goal of our course; and let us bear with the greater fortitude our present afflictions because the race is short, and we are destined not to the fugitive enjoyments of this life, but to the possession of that blessed eternity in which we shall participate the wisdom and righteousness of God.

"But as you, my learned and pious friend, are well acquainted with these truths, I have written the more briefly; and I pray God to invigorate both your body and mind. You remember it is said, 'In HIM we live and move and have our being.' Farewell." Acts xvii. 28.

The preceding letter renders it almost superfluous to state as a matter of fact, what must be at once obvious to every reader, and what every future transaction in Melancthon's life will render increasingly evident, that he was remarkable for *piety;* humble, genuine, undissembled piety. The association of great intellectual capacities with bad moral habits is always to be deeply deplored, and no exterior embellishments of nature or art, no power of mind, no fascination of manners, can render an infidel in principle and a profligate in character otherwise than offensive and contemptible. Vice always degrades even the great, while religion inexpressibly ennobles even the little. In the present instance we have not to weep over talent perverted and abused by vicious associations, but to rejoice in seeing it devoted to the best of purposes, and forming an alliance with true piety, which was in fact the pillar of his confidence, the brightest ornament of his unblemished character, the consolation of his most desponding hours, the stimulating motive of all his public exertions, and the LAW of his family.

Among other interesting fragments of Melancthon's composition, a short but expressive GRACE, designed for the table, and probably used by himself, is extant.

BENEDICTIO MENSÆ.

His Epulis donisque tuis benedicite Christe
Ut foveant jussu corpora fessa tuo,
Non alit in fragili panis modo corpore vitam
Sermo tuus vitæ tempora longa facit.

THE TABLE BLESSED.

To these provisions which enrich our board,
The gifts thy liberal Providence bestows,
Saviour, thy benediction now afford,
From which alone their power to nourish flows.
A few short years material food supplies
Corporeal waste, and cheers our fainting hearts;
But thy imperishable word imparts,
A principle of life that never dies.

O Saviour!———
Bless what thy providential care
Has for our bodies given!
But thy good word, superior fare!
Sustains the soul for heaven.

Melancthon was characterized by *sincerity*, and totally devoid of every thing like deceit and dissimulation. There were no reserves about him; all was transparent, open, and honest, while at the same time, his manners were remarkably captivating. From this temper resulted a freeness in common conversation, which led him sometimes to express himself with a degree of inconsideration: and even when his intimate friends have endeavored to check his frankness from an apprehension of what indeed not unfrequently happened, that his words would be invidiously misrepresented, such was his consciousness of entire purity of motive, that they could seldom or never succeed in rendering him cautious. He was not only communicative, but his conversation was seasoned with *wit*. Disputing one day with a certain Italian on the real presence in the Eucharist, "*How is it*," *said he*, "*that you Italians will have a God in the sacramental bread—you, who do not believe there is a God in heaven?*" When he first changed his religious views, he conceived it impossible for others to withstand the evidence of truth in the public ministry of the gospel, but after forming a better acquaintance with human nature, and living to witness the futility of those fond but ill-founded expectations which a warm hearted piety is at first disposed to cherish, he remarked that "*he found old Adam was too hard for young Melancthon.*"

He was possessed of an extraordinary *memory*, and maintained that temperance in eating and drinking, that equanimity of mind, and those habits of reflection which essentially conduce to the perfection of this faculty. He was also inquisitive and read much, but with proper selection; retaining not only the general strain of the discourse, but the very words of the writer. Nor were these merely lodged in his memory, for he was remarkable for the facility with which he could call into use whatever he knew. The various kinds of information he gained were so arranged in the different compartments of his great mental repository, that he could at any time, and without any difficulty, find whatever he wanted: for he had the power of *recollecting* as well as of *retaining* knowledge. This qualification fitted him for controversy and made him peculiarly feared by his opponents.

Such was his *modesty* that he would never deliver his opinion upon important subjects without deliberation and serious thought. He considered no time misspent and no pains ill bestowed in the search of truth, and he was incessantly occupied in examining for himself. Sophistry and every species of evasion in argument excited his just abhorrence; seldom or never could it escape his penetrating eye, and whenever he detected it no considerations could deter him from expressing the most marked disapprobation. His own conceptions were clear, his language perspicuous, and his intentions upright. There was such a transparency in the whole stream of his argument in public discourses or disputations, that you could see to the very bottom of his motives and principles.

He was kind to a fault; and so exceedingly *humble*, that in the common concerns of life he was not ashamed to stoop even to menial offices if they were not base or dishonorable. Frequently he would put to shame the ill-humored disinclination of the lowest servants to discharge any part of their duty, by doing it himself.

The same happy combination of modesty and humility characterized all his deportment, and in a very conspicuous manner influenced his private conduct, his public transactions, and his various writings. It is not every author, however conscious of the blemishes which may have disfigured his first publications, that would be willing to make concessions of this description, "Nothing is more foolish than to attempt the defence of folly. An ingenious mind will acknowledge its mistakes, especially in subjects of a literary kind, and candidly confess its weakness or negligence in order that youth may learn from the example of others, to be more diligent in investigation and more careful in their mode of study. I will not scruple therefore to censure some things in the first edition of my own writings, and will not only recapitulate the course of my juvenile studies, but explain my meaning in some public transactions, and state why I issued certain theological publications."

M. Baillet, with a zeal natural to one of his faith, is anxious that the church of Rome should be duly

honored as the mother of so illustrious an offspring. "His parents," says he, "were most excellent Catholics, irreproachable in their manners, exemplary in their conduct, careful to maintain in their family the fear of God and a due observance of his commandments, walking before God with a simplicity, a fidelity, and a zeal like that of primitive Christians. I feel myself constrained to state these particulars, that you may remember to attribute to Melancthon's excellent education all that you read or hear said of his sweetness of temper, courtesy, temperance, modesty, and other virtues, for which the Protestants have so much extolled him: and that you may consider these qualities *as produced or cherished in the bosom of the Catholic church.*" Varillas, one of the greatest enemies of the Reformation, has nevertheless spoken of him in the following manner: "He possessed a sweetness and mildness of temper, that rendered him incapable of returning injury for injury. In observing the exactest rules of morality, he only followed his inclination, and notwithstanding the meanness of his birth,* he practised the utmost generosity his means would allow. No German wrote the Latin language with greater ease or in a more intelligible manner, yet he was never so attached to his own productions, or so prejudiced in their favor as to refuse making any corrections suggested by his friends."

Neither Melancthon's attachment to literature, nor his multifarious engagements in public seduced him from the cultivation of *domestic feelings*, and the discharge of *parental duties.* His wife and children, ever dear to his heart, were not forgotten amidst the deepest abstractions of study, or the greatest perplexity of engagement.

The habits of studious men have sometimes been represented as tending to disqualify them for the familiar intercourse of domestic or social life. It is often long before the clouds which profound study gathers over the mind can be entirely chased away, even by the cheering influence of innocent conviviality. At the same time a great man never appears greater than in descending from the high station where public opinion or extraordinary genius has enthroned him to an approachable familiarity. It is then his friends will no longer censure his abstractions nor his affectionate family deprecate his fame. Melancthon may be appealed to as a pleasing illustration of this remark. A Frenchman one day, found him holding a book in one hand and rocking his child's cradle with the other. Upon his manifesting considerable surprise, Melancthon took occasion from the incident to converse with his visitor on the duties of parents, and on the regard of heaven for little children in such a pious and affectionate manner, that his astonishment was quickly transformed into admiration. The fondness he cherished for his own family extended to children in general. He possessed, in a very eminent degree, the rare art of making himself a captivating and instructive companion to them. He descended with the most happy ease to their level, promoted by his jocularity their little pleasures, and engaged with all his heart in their games and festivities. He would often exercise their ingenuity, by devising fictions and puzzles, and took great delight in relating useful scraps of history or memorable tales.

He always estimated *Time* as a most precious possession. It is said of him, that when he made an appointment, he expected not only that the day or the hour, but that the *minute* should be fixed, in order that time might not be squandered away in the vacuity or idleness of suspense.

In his youth he was remarkably troubled with sleeplessness, which the regularity of his general habits at length overcame. When letters or papers arrived in the evening he always referred them to the next morning for inspection, least the hours devoted to sleep which he found indispensable to the due preservation of health, should be disturbed.

His matrimonial connection was not only a happy, but a very lasting one. Formed for each other, this favored pair were not destined to suffer the pangs of early separation; but lived in undisturbed harmony for thirty-seven years. They had four children, two sons and two daughters.

Anne, his eldest daughter, appears to have been the favorite child, for she was not only handsome and accomplished, but of a very literary turn. Luther in one of his letters, calls her "the elegant daughter of Philip." On the sixth of November, 1536, she was married to George Sabinus, a native of Brandenburg, who being sent to Melancthon with the powerful recommendation of Erasmus to be educated, became an inmate of his family. His thirst after knowledge was so unbounded, that no labor however great, which was deemed requisite to attain it, damped his inextinguishable zeal. By day and by night he devoted himself to study, and overlooked or despised every obstacle in the path of knowledge. But his taste even surpassed his zeal, particularly in poetic compositions. Camerarius relates that he had seen him weep abundantly when reading an exquisite piece of poetry, and that though he would deeply deplore his own infelicity in composition, no one in reality excelled him. His poem entitled "*Res gestæ Cæsarum Germanorum,*" procured him not only a very extensive reputation in Germany, but the notice and patronage of the most enlightened princes of the age, and he became successively professor of the Belles Lettres at Frankfort on the Oder, rector of the New Academy of Konigsberg, and counsellor to the Elector of Brandenburg. It will not appear surprising that such a youth, and in such favorable circumstances, should have ingratiated himself into Melancthon's esteem, and attracted the affections of his accomplished daughter.

It is related of Sabinus, that on a certain occasion when he was dining in company with Stigelius and Melancthon, the latter engaged them in an extempore poetical contest. Sabinus being the elder of the two was required to begin, which he did in these words:

"Carmina conscribant alii dictante Lyæo,
Multa sit in versu cura laborque meo;"
Some silly scribblers soon their pages fill
Let care and labor regulate *my* quill!

to which Stigelius replied,

"Carmina componant alii sudante cerebro,
Nulla sit in versu cura laborque meo."
Some toil and sweat to elaborate a rhyme—
Let *no* such care nor labor waste *my* time.

The two poetical gladiators had the satisfaction of being equally extolled by Melancthon, the one for his attack, and the other for his defence.

Stigelius obtained a considerable poetical notoriety, and Melancthon has expressed a very high opinion of his merit. He wrote a variety of epitaphs, epigrams, and epithalamia, a metrical translation of many of the Psalms of David, with other little compositions, of which the following monumental inscription for himself is not the least curious:—

Hic ego Stigelius jaceo; quis curat? ut omnis
Negligat hoc mundus; scit tamen ipse Deus.
Here lies Stigelius;—but who marks the spot?
Well—let the world neglect me! God will not.

* The Papists were extremely fond of representing their adversaries as low and baseborn persons, in order, as they imagined, to render their cause contemptible.

But this apparently happy and suitable connection was destined to become a source of considerable affliction. Sabinus was very different in character from his father-in-law Melancthon. The elegant pleasures of literature did not satisfy him; for he was naturally ambitious, and the fame he acquired by his poetic publications, fed the secret flame till it could no longer be suppressed. Melancthon was attached to the more humble life of a man of letters and a man of piety, nor could he be induced by the most pressing entreaties to pursue any measures for the promotion of his children to posts of civil distinction and emolument. He employed all his skill to cure the raging fever of Sabinus, but in vain; for the poet worshipped fame and wealth. They became therefore discontented with each other, and found it best to separate. The lovely spirit of Melancthon however prevented any serious dissention, and they eventually parted with mutual good will and kindness. Sabinus took his wife into Prussia, where to her father's inexpressible grief, she died, after a residence of four years, at Konigsberg.

The youngest daughter of Melancthon was married in the year 1550, to Casper Peucer, whose name is one of the most celebrated in German literature, as well as in the annals of the Reformation. He was a physician, and through the favor of the Elector of Saxony, made professor of Medicine in the University of Wittemberg. He was always sent for to court when any important deliberations of a medical kind were held, and enjoyed free access to the Elector. His writings are numerous in medicine, mathematics, and theology. Above all, he is to be ranked amongst the illustrious sufferers for the cause of truth.

After the death of Melancthon, Peucer, in conjunction with the divines of Wittemberg and Leipsic, and of several ecclesiastics and persons of distinction in the court of Saxony, aimed to introduce the Calvinistic sentiments respecting the Eucharist, denying most strenuously the Lutheran doctrine of the corporeal presence of Christ. Great commotions being excited, the Elector Augustus, in the year 1571, called a solemn assembly of the Saxon divines, and of all persons concerned in the administration of ecclesiastical affairs, at Dresden. Augustus commanded them to adopt his opinion respecting the Eucharist, which at that time agreed with that of Peucer and the moderate Lutherans; but he was soon seduced by the insinuations of their adversaries, who represented the church as in danger, to change sides, and in consequence of finding that the Saxon divines, who were the disciples of Melancthon, propagated their sentiments with the utmost assiduity, he called a new convention at Torgaw in the year 1574, where he assumed the dictator's chair and wielded the persecutor's sword. Of those who denied the corporeal presence, some were imprisoned, others banished, and others compelled to renounce their sentiments. Peucer had the honor of suffering amongst the former. He endured the severities of a cruel imprisonment for ten years, and was released at last only through the intercession of the Prince of Anhalt.

Among the rare instances of eminent persons attached to the reformed cause in the early period of its progress which is now under review, comprising the year 1520, the name of John Thurzo, Bishop of Breslaw, in Silesia, claims a distinguished notice. It is true little, too little is known of him; but as the early traveller watches the commencement and the gradual progress of the dawning day, by the first beams that strike successively upon surrounding objects, so the observant reader will unite with the vigilant biographer, in hailing each indication of increasing light in a world enveloped in mysterious darkness. The bishop of Breslaw, therefore, ought to be mentioned for the pleasing singularity of his character, as the decided friend of the infant Reformation. He died in peace in the month of August, meriting this noble eulogium. This was expressed in a letter addressed to the bishop, which he did not live long enough to receive. Luther wrote to him at the same time, in language indicative of an equal esteem.

"Who is there," says Melancthon, "that does not love the man, who, so far as I know, is the only man in Germany, that by his authority, learning, and piety, has furnished an example of what a bishop ought to be? If the Christian world could but produce ten persons of a similar *stamp and cast of thinking* (*sumphradmones*,) as Homer says, I should not doubt of seeing the kingdom of Christ in some measure restored."

CHAPTER V.

The Pope's Bull against Luther—His retaliation—Diet of Worms - Luther's seizure and imprisonment at the castle of Wartenberg—Feelings of Melancthon—Condemnation of Luther by the Sarbonne—Melancthon's satirical rejoinder—His publication under the feigned name of Thomas Placentinus—His declamation on the study of Paul—Extracts from his Loci Communes, or Theological Common Places—Transactions relative to the abolition of private masses. 1520, 1521.

RETURNING from the disputations at Leipsic, Eckius resolved if possible to ruin Luther, and pursued his purpose with inveterate malignity and unremitting zeal. He flew to Rome, implored Leo X. to excommunicate this heretic, and obtained the vigorous co-operation of the Dominicans, then in high favor at court, who were willing to revenge the quarrel of their brother Tetzel.

At length on the fifteenth of June, 1520, the Pope issued a Bull against Luther, in which after calling upon Christ, St. Peter, St. Paul, and all the saints to interpose in behalf of the church, forty-one propositions are extracted from his writings, and condemned as pestilential, scandalous and offensive to pious minds; all persons are interdicted from reading them upon pain of excommunication, and unless the heretic should present himself at Rome, within sixty days, in order to take his trial before the supreme Pontiff, he is fully EXCOMMUNICATED. But these menaces were ineffectual; in many places the decree was delayed or evaded—even at Leipsic it was violently opposed, and at Erfurt it was forcibly wrested from Eckius, torn in pieces and thrown into the river by a body of academicians. Many of the Roman Catholic writers condemn the imprudence of Leo in this and other hasty proceedings against the Saxon Reformer, but it is more than probable that had the effect been different, they would have spared the Tiara.

Immediately previous to the publication of this celebrated anathema, Luther had been offered an asylum from his persecutors, by Sylvester Schaumberg, a Franconian knight, whose son was under the tuition of Melancthon. "I offer you," said he, "my own protection, and that of one hundred noblemen in Franconia, with whom you can live in safety until your doctrine has undergone a deliberate investigation." The state of his mind at this critical juncture may be ascertained from his own language to his friend Spalatine, the Elector's secretary, upon transmitting to him the generous letter of Schaumberg. "As for me, the die is cast. I equally despise the favor and fury of Rome, I have no longer any wish to be connected with or reconciled to them. Let them condemn me and burn my books, and if I do not in return publicly condemn and burn the whole pontifical code, it will only be from want of fire." In fact, on the tenth of December, 1520, in the presence of an immense con-

course of people of all ranks, he committed the Bull of Leo, the decretals of the Pontiffs, and other similar documents to the flames, in testimony of his everlasting separation from the Romish communion. Nor did he neglect to use the *pen* as well as the *torch*, by which he appealed from the Pope to a general council, and exposed the pretensions and corruption of the church of Rome in several tracts. A second Bull was issued against him in the month of January, 1521, in which the Pope styles himself "the divinely appointed dispenser of spiritual and temporal punishments:" it consisted of a recapitulation of the preceding Bull, and a formal excommunication of Luther.

During these transactions the Elector Frederic acted with a prudence and discretion which proved eminently serviceable to the Reformation. Had he been *less* the friend of Luther and of truth, he would have delivered him up to his enraged adversaries; had he been *more* zealous it would have been equally fatal, by exposing himself to the papal anathemas, and the infant cause, which he secretly and therefore effectually patronized, to almost inevitable destruction. His conduct and character cannot be more accurately depicted than in the words of Melancthon. "This most excellent prince was much concerned to foresee the contests and disorders which would ensue, though the first attacks made by Luther were upon very plausible grounds. By his own judgment and sagacity, and by long experience in the art of government, he well knew the danger of revolutions. But being a truly religious man and one who feared God, he consulted not the dictates of mere worldly and political wisdom, which might have inclined him to stifle at once all symptoms of innovation. He determined to prefer the glory of God to all other considerations, and to listen to the divine command which enjoins obedience to the gospel. He knew that it was a horrible profaneness to resist the truth when plainly seen and known. He had studiously examined Luther's works, and accurately weighed his proofs and testimonies; and he would not suffer doctrines to be oppressed and smothered which he judged to be the word of God. The Holy Spirit confirmed and supported him in these excellent resolutions, so that though the Emperors Maximilian and Charles, and the Roman Pontiffs urged this prince, and not without menaces, to hinder Luther from writing and preaching in his dominions, he was not in the least degree shaken or intimidated. Yet he presumed not to rely entirely on his own judgment in a matter of such great importance, but took the advice of other persons who were venerable for their rank, learning, and experience."

After the death of Maximilian I. the unanimous vote of the electoral college placed Charles V. upon the imperial throne, who was publicly crowned at Aix-la-Chapelle, on the twenty-third of October, 1520, the year after his election. Leo immediately applied to him to inflict an exemplary punishment on Luther for disobedience to papal authority, while Frederic exerted his influence, an influence derived from the personal obligations of Charles, who had been created Emperor chiefly through his exertions, to obtain a public and fair investigation of his cause in Germany previous to the promulgation of any condemnatory edict. The result was that the Emperor appointed a diet at Worms in January, 1521, to which, under the protection of a safe conduct, Luther repaired in April.

His friends recollecting the fate of John Huss, were extremely apprehensive, and would have dissuaded him from venturing amongst his enemies. Their fears increased as he approached the city. Every argument was used to prevent his perseverance, and when at Oppenheim he was met by Bucer,* who had been sent to entreat him to take refuge in a neighboring castle; upon which occasion he uttered that heroic and most characteristic declaration which both Protestant and Papist historians have recorded: "I am lawfully called to appear in the city of Worms, and thither will I go in the name of the Lord, though as many devils as there are tiles on the houses were there combined against me."

At this crisis Melancthon thus expresses himself in a letter to one of his friends. "Martin still lives and prospers, notwithstanding the indignation and fury of Leo, to whom all things have hitherto been supposed possible. Nobody approves the Bull which Eckius is enforcing, unless it be those who are more concerned for their own ease and indulgence than for the success of the gospel. We are certainly in no danger from it at present, though the hierarchy raves and thunders. O that you knew with what trembling hesitation this pontifical mandate is executed, for its abettors are in a complete strait betwixt the general opinion on the one hand, and the anger of the Roman Pontiff on the other, while there are many who would rather be openly accused of any crime than appear to be deficient in religious zeal for the Pope. You are doubtless acquainted with the proceedings at Worms, though I may say a word or two on that subject. Charles is constantly urged to proscribe Luther by an imperial edict, and there are great deliberations and debatings about it. If the Papists could prevail, in their rage they would destroy us, and they are vexed at the inefficiency of the pontifical decrees. They are in hopes that those which they are using every means, but I trust in vain, to extort from the emperor, will prove availing. Nothing can terrify Martin Luther, who would willingly purchase the advancement and glory of the gospel AT THE PRICE OF HIS BLOOD."

Private conferences and public examinations, violent threats and gentle entreaties, were alternately employed to cajole or to force him into a recantation of his heretical opinions and a submission to the Roman Pontiff. It was all in vain. He was neither to be compelled nor seduced into compliance. He COULD suffer death, but he COULD NOT violate the dictates of conscience! The wonder is, that when his enemies were so inveterate and himself so intrepid and resolute, he should have been allowed to depart from Worms in peace; but the members of the Diet refused to expose themselves to the reproach of a violation of faith, and the Emperor was unwilling to contend with them from political motives. Luther was allowed twenty-one days to return home, and required not to preach to the people in the course of his journey. A few days after he had withdrawn, an edict was issued by the authority of the Diet in the Emperor's name, declaring him a member cut off from the church, a schismatic, a notorious and obstinate heretic: forbidding all persons, under penalty of high treason, loss of goods, and being put under the BAN of the Empire, to receive, defend, maintain or protect him, either in word or writing; and all his adherents, followers, and favorers to suffer the confiscation of their property, unless they had left his party, and had received *absolution by apostolic authority!*

The formidable edict of Worms however was in

* Martin Bucer was born at Shelestadt in Alsace. He spent several days with Luther, at Worms, and embraced his opinions. He afterwards preached the doctrines of the Reformation at Strasberg and was extremely active in endeavoring to reconcile the Lutherans and Zuinglians. In the year 1549, Archbishop Cranmer invited him to England, and he became a lecturer in Divinity, in the University of Cambridge, where he died in 1551, at the age of sixty-one.

a great measure superseded by two circumstances, namely, the multiplicity of the Emperor's engagements arising out of commotions in Spain, and the wars of Italy and the Low Countries; and a curious, but well concerted and well timed contrivance of his wary friend the Elector of Saxony. Foreseeing the meditated attack upon Luther, Frederic employed several trusty persons in masks to seize upon him as he was passing a forest in Thuringia, near Altenstein, and convey him to the castle of Wartenberg, which was situated on a high mountain in the vicinity of Eisenach. In his retreat he passed for a country gentleman, under the assumed name of Yonker George. The consequence of this sudden disappearance was unfavorable to his adversaries who were suspected of having plotted his destruction, the Imperial edict missed its aim, and his opinions—or rather, "The word of the Lord grew, and was multiplied." Acts xi. 24.

Luther's confinement in the castle of Wartenberg, placed Melancthon at the head of the reformed cause, who was well aware of the responsibility of his situation. After a considerable lapse of time he writes to his friend Hess: "I feel the need I have of good advice. Our Elijah is still confined at a distance from us, though we are expecting and anticipating his return. What shall I say more? His absence absolutely torments me." Though there was indeed an alloy of constitutional timidity, which cannot but be considered as some depreciation of his sterling value in the peculiar situation of ecclesiastical affairs, no one was so well qualified to maintain the respectability and promote the success of the Lutheran cause. The great Reformer well knew his extraordinary merit, and requested him to assist in the discharge of some of those clerical duties for which he was incapacitated by absence. In one of his letters he addresses him thus: "For the glory of the word of God and the mutual consolation of myself and others, I would rather be consumed in a blazing fire, than remain here half alive and utterly useless. If I perish, the gospel of Christ will not perish, and you, I hope, like another Elisha, will succeed Elijah." Again he writes, "The accounts which I receive of your abundant success in religion and learning during my absence, rejoice my heart exceedingly, and very much diminish the miseries of separation. The circumstance of your going on so prosperously while I am absent, is peculiarly delightful to me, because it may serve to convince the wicked one, that however he may rage and foam, their desires shall perish and Christ will finish the work which he has begun."

Melancthon was constitutionally hypochondriacal; and as even trifling circumstances frequently disturb the peace of such persons, it was to be expected that the state of things at this momentous crisis would produce a powerful effect upon his mind. His heart was interested in the cause of pure Christianity, his happiness was deeply involved in it, his sensibilities were perpetually wrought upon by surrounding occurrences, and his spirits ebbed and flowed according to the success or decline of that cause which was to him the dearest upon earth. In fact the situation of Melancthon and the friends of the Reformation was peculiarly afflictive. The transactions at Worms and the subsequent concealment of Luther, had inspired Frederic with an unusual degree of caution amounting to timidity, in his proceedings. The writings of Luther were not allowed to be published, and the academicians were interdicted the discussion of questions likely to offend persons of distinction, who were attached to Popery. That Luther deeply sympathized with his friend and participated in his sentiments, is obvious from his own words. "I sit here in my Patmos, reflecting all the day on the wretched condition of the church. I bemoan the hardness of my heart, that I am not dissolved in tears on this account. May God have mercy upon us!" It would however be flagrantly unjust to impute the strong sensation of either of these exalted characters to pusillanimity. Though much distressed, they fully coincided in the principles recognized in another of Luther's epistles—"The peace and approbation of God is ever to be preferred to the peace and approbation of the world. * * * In all circumstances we ought to adhere strictly to the simple word of God, and, not merely when that word happens to thrive and be respected among men. Let those who please take against us. But why are we to be always looking on the dark side of things? why not indulge hopes of better times?"

At length these bosom friends contrived a mode of alleviating the anxiety that was so intolerable, and of obtaining each other's assistance in the present crisis. This was a secret visit of Luther to Wittemberg, which was hastened by the prevalence of various evils, especially the conduct of Carlostadt, which will be noticed in a subsequent page. He states the circumstance to Spalatine: "I came to Wittemberg and amongst the delightful intercourse enjoyed with my friends, I found this bitter, that my little pamphlets and letters had neither been heard of nor seen, for which you shall judge, whether I was not justly displeased. However, on the whole, what I have seen and heard has afforded me the greatest satisfaction. May the Lord comfort those who are interested in the cause: but on my way I was vexed with the various rumors I heard of the imprudences of some of our friends, and I propose to publish some suitable exhortations as soon as I return to my asylum. Commend me to our illustrious prince, from whom I wish to conceal my journey to Wittemberg, for a reason of which you are aware. Farewell. I am in Amsdorff's house with my beloved friend Philip Melancthon."—*Luther*, Ep. 253.

In England Henry VIII. published a book against Luther and in defence of the seven sacraments of the Romish Church, for which he received the title never yet relinquished by his successors, of *Defender of the Faith*. In France, the divines of the Sorbonne,* published a formal condemnation of Luther's writings, dated the 15th of April, 1521, in which they show the danger to which Christians are exposed from his *poisonous errors*, and charge him with rashness in preferring his own judgment to that of the Universities and Holy Fathers of the Church, *as though God had given him the knowledge of many truths necessary for salvation, which the church had been ignorant of during the past ages, being left by Jesus Christ her spouse in the darkness of error.*

Melancthon immediately gave them a very suitable flagellation in a small piece, entitled "Adversus furiosum Parisiensium Teologastrorum decretum pro Luthero apologia;—*An apology for Luther, in opposition to the furious decree of the Parisian Theologasters.*" This was gratifying to his friend *Yonker George*, in confinement at Wartenberg. "I have seen," says he, "the Decree of the *Parisian Sophists*, together with the Apology of Philip, and from my very heart I rejoice: for Christ would not have given them up to such blindness had not he determined to

* The term applied to the faculty of Theology at Paris. The college of the University in which they assembled was called the house of the Sorbonne, which was first erected and endowed in the year 1250, by a wealthy favorite of Louis, whose name was Robert de Sorbonne. That theological society was, at that period, in the highest repute.

promote his own cause, and to put a stop to the despotism of its adversaries."

In this satirical pamphlet Melancthon begins by remarking, that, "during the past year, the Sophists of Cologne and Louvain condemned the gospel in a set of naked propositions, unsupported by either reason or Scripture, and that now the Parisian divines had acted in the same irrational manner. By the spirit which pervades the Decree it may be determined whether it is from God, who is not the author of malice, or *from another quarter!*" It appeared almost incredible that *such* a work should have proceeded from *such* a university, distinguished as it had been by remarkable men, and especially by the great and pious Gerson. A letter was prefixed to the Decree which he supposed must have been written by some hired declaimer, because it displayed such womanish violence, that it was too silly for a divine! "What does it contain? 'Oh! Luther is a Manichæan! a Montanist! he despises us forsooth!—he is mad!—he must be brought to his senses by fire and flames!' What feminine, what *monkish* weakness!

"Luther is accused of heresy, not because he differs from SCRIPTURE, but from the *Holy Fathers*, *Councils*, and *Universities*, whose opinions are received as the first principles of religion!! But are Holy Fathers, and Councils, and Universities to decree the articles of Christian faith? And how can this be the case, when they are so liable to err, Occam himself being judge, if you will not credit me? Is our faith to depend upon the opinions of men? So did not Paul determine when he affirmed, that 'other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.'—1 Corinthians, iii. 11.

"Luther then does not dissent from SCRIPTURE, but from YOUR judgment, and from the sense which the *Fathers*, *Councils* and *Schools* have adopted; and this I see is the great cause of the controversy, and the great sin he has committed! But what after all is decreed by the Councils, when some things are false and some true, some conformable to Scripture, and some contrary to it; so that Scripture must be the *final appeal*, and if any passages be obscure, they are to be compared with others, and thus Scripture will explain itself. 'If an angel from heaven,' says the apostle, 'preach any other gospel than what I preach let him be accursed.'—Galatians, i. 10. Surely then Luther may oppose the obvious sentiment of Scripture to Councils, Fathers, and Universities! What can these Sophists reply? What sort of logic and what kind of glosses can they use to avoid the inference from these statements? Either deny that there is any certain sense in Scripture, or acknowledge that Luther is justifiable in placing its dictates in opposition to human opinion.

"After all he is not inclined to concede that Luther and the ancient Fathers and Councils disagree. On various points he is completely supported by the sentiments of Augustine, Cyprian, Hilary, and Chrysostom; though it is true many things are to be found in the writings of Luther on the sacraments, vows, and other subjects, which cannot be discovered in them. No wonder, for that age knew nothing of the tyrannical laws of Roman Pontiffs, nothing of our *Parisian Masters* and their articles of faith. That period may, perhaps, be considered as the noon-day of evangelical truth; ours as the declining evening in which darkness covers the minds of sinners as a punishment for their guilt; and that is darkness indeed in which the Sorbonne divinity prevails, a divinity which extols *human opinion* as paramount to *scriptural truth!* Does not the spirit of God, by his prophets, threaten such a punishment, and does not Paul speak of those who should teach for doctrines the commandments of men?—and to whom can he refer but—to the *Sorbonne divines*, or *such as they?*

"Nay more, whatever criminality may be supposed to attach to any persons for opposing the Fathers, is to be charged upon these very Parisian disputants themselves, who diametrically contradict them. The very best of the Fathers denounce whatever is not from the spirit of Christ, as sinful; but these not only do not allow of their guilt, but absolutely affirm many of them to be meritorious. The Fathers deny that mere human strength is adequate to fulfil the divine law, these Parisians state the very reverse.

"It is written, if an offender refuse to hear the church let him be as a heathen man and a publican. I pray now what do you call the church? No doubt, the *French*, or *Sorbonne Church.* But how can that be the church of Christ which has not the word of Christ, who testifies that his sheep hear his voice? We denominate *that* his true church which is built upon THE WORD OF GOD, and which is nourished, fed, and governed by it; in a word, which derives every thing, and judges of every thing, by THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST, for 'he that is of God heareth the words of God.'

"You, the Sorbonne Church, without appealing to reason or Scripture, condemn Luther and exclude him from the communion of the pious. But it did not become you to *condemn*, but to *accuse.* You do not accuse or convince by argument, but contrary both to divine and human laws, at once *condemn*, and for no other reason than because you are the Sorbonne divines, and lords of our faith, to be sure! For shame! for shame!!! But stay, I must not treat the *Sorbonne* so irreverently! for these lords over our faith say they imitate the example of the apostles, when they issue decisions without scriptural authority. I wish, however, they would verify this statement by some reference. Christ himself quotes the authority of Scripture. Paul does the same; and what are all the apostolic discourses but the testimonies derived from the records of the Old Testament concerning Christ? The *Sorbonne only* is to be believed *without* SCRIPTURE!

"He imagines this fraternity must be of Egyptian origin, and the descendants of Jannes and Jambres, who resisted Moses. The truth of the Lutheran doctrines, however, he is satisfied will remain immoveable and unshaken, not only by their opposition, but in spite of the rulers of darkness."

Soon after the publication of this performance a mock answer appeared in the name of the Parisian divines, written in a ludicrous style and intended to make them appear ridiculous. Dupin imputes it to Luther, and Seckendorf expresses a doubt whether it were written by him or some other friend.

Another controversial piece of the present year, under the feigned name of Didymus Faventinus, against Thomas Placentinus, and on behalf of Luther, is to be attributed to Melancthon. It consists of forty-four folio pages. In this performance he details the history of the Lutheran controversy, and refutes the various calumnies of the enemies of truth and the reformation. "Luther," says he, "is most iniquitously condemned for having delivered his country from the papal impositions, for daring to eradicate the errors of so many centuries, and restoring to the light pure Christianity, which had been nearly extinguished by the impious decrees of the Popes, and the vain sophistries of the schoolmen. I am not alone in ascribing this merit to Luther; the learned universally do the same: and I state this lest you should imagine that he is the sole author of the present commotions, which ought rather to be imputed to those who have done

nothing else during the past three years than plot the destruction of Luther. Do not suppose their object is the peace of the Christian community—no—it is solely that they might be able to tyrannize completely over it."

Rhadinus, in his declamatory publication, banters Luther, telling him that he ought to feel himself very much obliged to his friend Philip Melancthon, for taking the pains to *polish up his writings and enable him to cut a better figure than he would in his own barbarous style:* and censures him for discountenancing liberal studies. "Luther," replies Melancthon, "is no enemy to mathematics and natural philosophy. He thinks the study of coins, plants, and the habits of animals, conducive to the knowledge of the sacred writings, and ought to be encouraged in the academy. He approves authors of this class, which we use, as Pliny, Athenæus, and, if you please, Aristotle, Theophrastus, Dioscorides, not to mention the poets."

After exposing the errors of the scholastic divinity, both in metaphysics and in morals, "with prodigious force of argument and fluency of language," and discussing a variety of other topics, he proceeds to the subject of grace. "Philosophers imagine that men may obtain the highest pitch of virtue by exercise and habit; on the contrary the sacred writings teach that all human performances are polluted by sin, and can be cleansed only by the Spirit which Christ procured for men. Philosophers attribute every thing to human power; but the sacred writings represent all moral power as lost by the fall. The scholastics, in imitation of the philosophers who ascribed the merit and the goodness to human power, affirmed that the Spirit was delighted to dwell with us after this self-created excellence, but not to transform or purify the soul by his agency. Who does not perceive how the truth of Christ is obscured and lost by this statement; this utter rejection of the scriptural representations of the Spirit as the author of sanctification and of every thing good in man: and this shameless, this arrogant assumption of human merit? Hence have originated those endless disputes respecting offerings, rewards, and cardinal virtues, in which every thing is attributed to human nature, and nothing to Christ.

"The terms grace, faith, hope and charity, are so abused, that they have quite a different meaning in the sacred writings from that which is given them in the controversies of scholastic divines, so that we have not only lost the doctrine, but the very language of Christianity. Grace, denotes the favor of God through Christ—but where does it ever signify, as they assert, *a form of soul?* Whence originated the terms *faith infused* or *acquired, formed* and *unformed?* What is their authority for teaching that Christian minds must hope for salvation from human merits? Whence indeed is this profane, impious and arrogant word, *merit?*

"The church, ye princes, appeals to your faith and piety, that, enslaved as she has hitherto been by vain philosophy and human traditions, you would at length emancipate her from her wretched state, her Babylonian servitude!"

He complains bitterly of the state of the universities, and entreats the different princes to use their utmost exertions to procure that reform which was so essentially requisite. "The youth, the most tender and susceptible part of the community, are perishing in luxury, gluttony and excess. And what are they likely to do with such masters? And if they should have a diligent tutor, what will it avail if he cannot instruct them, or only in the most sparing manner, in sacred wisdom? For it is in vain you attempt to govern the youthful mind unless you arm it, by evangelical truth and holy example, against the lusts of the flesh, the influence of the world and the machinations of Satan.

"Every one of the ancient republics paid the greatest possible attention to the instruction of their youth; we, we only, who are denominated Christians, totally disregard and despise this, which is of all others the most important object. O ye princes, if no other consideration affect your minds, at least compassionate the situation of our youth, who are ruined by the wickedness of others! I have seen some of them by no means ill disposed, who would however rather continue in ignorance of letters, than purchase knowledge at so dear a rate; and who carried away nothing from the universities but a wounded conscience."

It is needless to quote any of those passages which are merely controversial, though in themselves witty, and at the time extremely necessary. Poor Rhadinus published a reply in the following year full of *feeling*, and furnishing ample proof that Melancthon had trod upon a snake.

Amongst the "Select Declamations," we find one of the present year on a subject which Melancthon was peculiarly qualified to discuss. It is entitled, "Adhortatio ad Christianæ Doctrinæ, per Paulum Proditæ, Studium;" or, An Exhortation to the Study of Christian Truth, as stated by the apostle Paul. After showing the superiority of Paul's doctrine, and the institutions of Christianity to human laws, and of Paul's eloquence to that of the most celebrated orators of antiquity, he concludes with the following solemn appeal: "If, O ye youths, you have any concern for your own best interests, devote your minds to the study of Paul. Inform yourselves from him of the genuine principles of the Christian life, the true means of religious consolation, and the estimate to be formed of all divine and human things. It concerns youth especially to embrace a doctrine of pre-eminent importance, as conducive to the felicity of man in his passage through the present life, and in prospect of departure from it. Paul instructs you how to live holily and to die happily, by warning the unwary of the snares which their formidable adversaries the flesh and the devil, have prepared for their ruin. You may without moral danger neglect other arts and studies, but it is impossible to despise the truth of the gospel, without sacrificing the hope of salvation. It becomes bishops to use their utmost endeavors, not only to see that those particularly devoted to sacred studies are well instructed, but to promote this knowledge throughout the whole Christian community; and it is incumbent on the academies to inculcate it with the greatest zeal, and substitute it for that barbarism and disputation falsely called philosophy, which our ancestors unhappily sanctioned. If it please God the brass shall become gold.

"It is with the deepest affliction of mind I observe that our public seminaries are nothing but the temples of Tophet, and the gloomy valley of the children of Hinnom. Christianity is banished. Athens had its Areopagus, and Sparta its school, where youth were trained up after the very best models, and were better instructed by these heathens than they are in our universities at this day. But do you yourselves, ye studious youth, seriously undertake the diligent study of St. Paul's writings, where Christ Jesus is evidently set forth, and his Spirit will unquestionably prosper your endeavors. No service is more acceptable to God, and no conduct can be more pious and praiseworthy than to aim at truth, and to acquire its transforming influence; and being once attempted, the labor will become so delightful that it will never be relinquished. The knowledge of any truth is pleasant, but the knowledge of Christian truth is singularly

beneficial, and you will find the writings of Paul both agreeable and useful.

"It is said that the Egyptians, a people unexampled for superstition, kept an annual festival in honor of Mercury, the reputed author of their laws and literature, on which occasion the multitude were accustomed to offer sacrifices of honey and figs. This rite proves the antiquity of the festival; for in the golden age, as it is called, almost all public entertainments and feasts were of a sacrificial nature, and honey and figs the most usual offerings to the gods, of which there is ample evidence. In the midst of these public solemnities the voice of melody was heard in a hymn to Mercury, neither rudely composed nor badly recited. It expressed the grateful sense they cherished of his having given them laws and formed a variety of institutions, and celebrated the praise of truth in general. May I not indulge the hope that the discovery of truth by the study of Paul, will excite similar sensations and strains of festive joy? for what can be more just and proper than that after being instructed in the best and most important knowledge, the burden of our song should be as theirs constantly was, "O lovely truth!"

The "Loci Communes Theologici," or "Theological Common Places," which was first published at Wittemberg in 1521, demands, on account of its magnitude and subsequent celebrity, a particular notice. None of the works of Melancthon, and scarcely any amongst the numerous productions of his illustrious contemporaries, excited greater attention, or circulated to a wider extent. It was very popular both in France and Italy. At Venice, it was published under the name of *Messer Philippo de Terra Nera*, and was extensively read. Not a syllable of disapprobation was expressed, till one Cordelier, who had read the work as it was first published, with the author's real name affixed, gave information to the inquisitors, who though they approved, or at least did not censure it, as the writing of *Philippo de Terra Nera*, instantly suppressed it as the production of *Philip Melancthon!*

"He that intends to be a good divine," says Luther, "hath a great advantage; for, first, he hath the Bible, which I have so plainly translated out of the Hebrew into the high German language, that every one may read it without difficulty. Afterwards he may read the Loci Communes of Philip Melancthon; and let him read with diligence, so that he may have it perfectly in his memory. When he has these two pieces, then he is a divine, against whom neither the devil, nor any heretic can be able to take advantage, for the whole of divinity lies open to him, so that he may read what and when he will for his edification." "We find no book where the sum of religion or divinity is more finely compacted together than in Melancthon's Loci Communes; all the Fathers and Sententiarii are not to be compared to it. It is the best book next to the holy Scriptures.

The first editions of this publication were not complicated like the succeeding ones with large discussions and illustrations which the prevalence of controversy induced its author afterwards to believe necessary. To meet the reasonings and obviate the objections of the Catholic writers, Melancthon continually republished it with enlargements, but without any material change of its principles.

In the dedication of this work to Henry VIII. the author states the motive which influenced him to prepare it, and they are such as cannot fail to secure the approbation of every pious mind. In order to secure the great purpose of *utility*, he represents himself as avoiding all questions of mere curiosity, and expresses his characteristic abhorrence of the intricacies of controversy as tending rather to perplex than instruct the mind.

To an edition published in French, at Geneva, in the year 1551, the illustrious John Calvin has prefixed an advertisement, in which he eulogizes the author in the strongest terms: and of the Common Places in particular he very justly remarks, "it is a summary of those truths which are essential to the Christian's guidance in the way of salvation." A very cursory analysis only of the sentiments contained in this celebrated performance is admissible.

God. "The human mind, originally formed in the image of God, and capable of knowing him, is, however, in consequence of sin, enveloped in darkness, and can scarcely of itself determine whether there be a God or a Providence. Although nature is every where marked with traces of the Divinity, and with evidences of his interference in human affairs, such is the weakness of man, that he is full of doubt and hesitation on the subject. It is, therefore, a proof of divine goodness to enlighten and instruct us by his word.

"God is a spiritual essence, possessing eternity and the attributes of power, wisdom, goodness, justice and mercy, in an infinite degree, which are not separable from himself, or incompatible in their operations. The unity of God is stated in the following passages: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord.'—'I am the first, and I am the last, and besides me there is no God.'—'I am the Lord and there is none else, there is no God beside me.' —'We know that an idol is nothing in the world, and there is none other God but one.'—'One God and Father of all.' Deut. vi. 4. Is. xliv. 6. Is. xlv. 5. 1 Cor. viii. 4. Eph. iv. 6.

"The Scriptures teach us, however, that the essence of God consists in three persons, infinite and co-eternal, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

"The Son is denominated by John, the Logos or word. In the epistle to the Hebrews he is called 'the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person;' and 'all things' are said to have been 'made by him.' In the Colossians he is termed 'the image of the invisible God.' Heb. i. 3. John i. 3. Col. i. 15.

"The third person, or Holy Spirit, is represented by John as proceeding from the Father and the Son. The Son, at the predestined period of time, assumed human nature and was born of the Virgin Mary. He was the Christ, one person consisting in two natures, the divine and the human. Neither the Father nor the Spirit assumed human nature, but the Son.

"The doctrine of the Trinity is supported by Scripture. In the last chapter of Matthew mention is made of 'baptizing in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.' Three persons are here distinctly named and each is assigned an equal power and honor. The appeal or invocation is made to each, and so as to imply an equal authority.

"Christ must have been possessed of a divine nature, or it would not be proper to adore and invoke him. And the adoration, as stated in various passages, was not merely external, as we bow before kings and potentates, because omnipotence is attributed to him, and John affirms, 'in the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God.' John i. 1.

A copious variety of passages is here quoted from the Old and New Testaments, in proof of prayer and other acts of worship being presented to Christ, and the opinions of the Arians and Socinians are opposed by arguments and quotations from the Fathers.

In speaking of the HOLY SPIRIT, Melancthon remarks, that "the general signification of the term *spirit* is motion, either natural or by means of external impulse; but it is used in a variety of senses by the prophets and apostles, which must not be absurdly confounded together. Often it means the wind, the life of man, and the various movements of passion, good or bad. In the phrase 'God is a Spirit,' it signifies a spiritual essence, or a pure incorporeal intelligence It is applied to the Father, but not to him only, and it is requisite to distinguish those places where it refers to the Holy Spirit, and whose office is to sanctify and animate the soul."

The divinity and personality of the Holy Spirit are then maintained in a series of explanatory remarks on his appearance at the Baptism of Christ in the form of a dove, and on the day of Pentecost; and on a variety of passages commonly recited in the Trinitarian controversy.

CREATION. "All creatures are the workmanship of God; angels, men, and every other existence and substance. They were created from nothing, for 'by the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.' Psalm xxxiii. 6.

"If all things were made by the *word of the Lord*, they were not formed, as the Stoics imagined, from matter antecedently existing. And as God created, so he perpetually sustains all things and all beings. The fertility of the earth year after year, and the perpetuation of human life are to be attributed to what is called his general operations. 'In him we live and move and have our being.' 'Who upholds all things by the word of his power.' 'He giveth life to all flesh.' 'Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing, and not one of them shall fall to the ground without your father. Even the very hairs of your head are all numbered.' 'All wait on thee that thou mayest give them their meat in due season.' 'He covereth the heavens with clouds, he prepareth rain for the earth, he maketh grass to grow upon the mountains.' Acts xvii. 28. Hebrews i. 3. Matthew x. 29. Psalm civ. 27. Psalm cxlvii. 8.

"A variety of special promises have been given to the church, relating to the care of a superintending providence, and are to be found in every part of the Scriptures. The prayer which our Saviour directs us to present, 'give us this day our daily bread,' intimates our constant dependance, so that second causes cannot operate or avail us unless God give them efficiency.

"Other proofs of this subject might be adduced; as, 1. The order of nature, that is to say, a series of effects, showing an agent and cause. The regularity of these operations, as the course of the heavenly bodies, the succession of animals, and of the various productions of the earth, and the course of rivers, demonstrate they are not accidental coincidences, but resulting from an intelligent agent. 2. The nature of the human mind: what is devoid of intelligence cannot produce it, but the human mind possesses intelligence, and since each derives his being from another, the original being must be an intelligent one. 3. The distinction between virtue and vice, and the varieties of knowledge. It is not possible these should exist in the human soul without an adequate cause and by mere accident. 4. The uniform impression of the truth that there is a God—all acknowledge it. 5. Natural conscience: persons guilty of notorious crimes, suffer great alarms of mind, and yet do not apprehend that any punishment will be inflicted by man. They have a certain internal conviction of right and of wrong. 6. The constitution of civil society, which could not be organized and maintained in its various relations, but for the wisdom imparted and the regulations maintained by an eternal Providence. 7. The knowledge which is obtained and can be obtained only by the continuance of efficient causes. These are not infinite, we must therefore, recur to a first cause. 8. The existence of final causes. All things are destined to some use, but this appointment of a suitable end and purpose could not have been fortuitous nor can it continue by chance. It implies a superintending intelligence. 9. Prophetic signs and intimations of futurity. These are not only such signs as are notorious to the heathen world, but especially particular predictions to the church; often involving the fate of empires, as the predictions of Balaam, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Daniel. A foreseeing mind is necessarily pre-supposed. These considerations demonstrate both the being and the presiding providence of God.

CAUSE AND CONSEQUENCE OF SIN. "This has been a fruitful subject of disputation, and many great men on both sides have involved themselves in inextricable difficulties and absurdities. Let youth be admonished to lay aside contention, and seek only that simple truth which is conducive to genuine religion and sound morality. All wise men agree in one point, that God is not the author of sin, that he neither desires it nor impels the will to commit sin, but abhors it; but it is to be attributed to the influence of the devil and to the will of man. God, when he had created the universe, pronounced all very good, and Christ imputes evil to Satan, when he represents him as 'a liar and the father of lies.' The New Testament every where states the same sentiment. 'Whosoever committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning,' that is, the devil was the orignal author of sin. 1 John iii. 8.

"Such expressions as 'I will harden Pharoah's heart' do not contradict this representation, because they are mere Hebrew idioms, signifying the permission and not the effectual operation and impulse of the divine mind.

"The nature of original sin is hence apparent. It is not the original nature which the Deity implanted in man, but the corruption arising from disobedience. God then is not the author of sin, but properly speaking, it arose from the temptation of Satan and the will of man, which was created free.

FREEDOM OF THE HUMAN WILL. "By the term free will, is to be understood a faculty and power in the human will, to choose or reject whatever is presented to it; which power was far greater before nature was corrupted, but is now impeded by various means, to be hereafter stated. The apostles speak of the *heart* and the *mind*, that is, the will and the understanding.

"Many disputes have been agitated upon this subject, and the grand question is, in what manner can the will be free, or how can it obey the law of God? This question can only be resolved by considering the magnitude of that sin, or inherent infirmity which is contracted by our very birth, and the requirements of the law of God as extending not only to external obedience, but to that of the whole nature, perpetual and perfect. If the nature of man were not corrupted by sin, its knowledge of God would be more clear and certain; it would be affected with no doubts, but possessing a genuine fear and confidence would render a perfect obedience, that is to say, all the feelings of the soul would harmonize with the divine law like those of holy angels. In consequence of original sin, however, the nature of man is now full of doubts, darkness and error, destitute of true fear and confidence in God, and polluted with vile affections. Hence the question arises, what kind of power does the human will possess? I reply, that since the understanding of man is corrupted, and the choice of those things

which are subjected to reason or to sense is perverted, so also is his external and civil obedience.

"The gospel teaches us that such is the dreadful depravity of nature, that it is totally repugnant to the law of God, so that we cannot obey; and the human will cannot, by any exertion of its own, eradicate this depravity. Such is the blindness of human nature, that we do not even discern this moral infirmity and corruption, for if we did, the reason of our incapacity to satisfy the divine law would be at once apparent. The law requires perfect obedience, but our corrupt nature cannot render it; and it is of this corruption we speak, not in reference to external acts but internal affections and conformity to God, when discoursing on the freedom of the human will.

"To this let it be added, that without the Holy Spirit we cannot exercise spiritual affections as love to God, faith in his mercy, obedience and endurance in afflictions, delight in him and others of a similar nature. Many passages of Scripture confirm this statement, 'As many as are led by the Spirit of God they are the sons of God.' If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.' Rom. viii. 9, 14. These two are sufficiently obvious, for they distinctly intimate that we can only obey by the grace of the Holy Spirit. To these may be added a multitude of others, as the 'natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned.'—'Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.'—'No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him.' —'Without me ye can do nothing.' 1 Cor. ii. 14. John iii. 5. John vi. 44. John xv. 5.

"The question then being proposed respecting spiritual actions, this seems to be the truth which it becomes us to maintain, that without the aid of the Holy Spirit the human will can perform none of those spiritual actions which God requires, namely, the genuine fear of God, faith in his mercy, perfect love, patience in affliction, persevering constancy even to death, of which holy Stephen, Lawrence and Agnes, with innumerable others, are illustrious examples.

The Gospel. "This term is used in the most ancient of the Greek writers. In Homer, it signifies the reward which is bestowed on the messenger of good things, and in Aristophanes and Isocrates it denotes the sacrifice which is offered when any good news is announced. In other authors it is used for the *message itself, the news communicated*, in which sense the apostles have adopted it. Plutarch, in the life of Artaxerxes, plainly speaks of the reward of *the gospel* or *good news*, for to this the reference is obvious. In the life of Pompey, he says, 'the messengers arrived at Pontus bringing *the gospel*,' that is, *the good and joyful intelligence*. Cicero uses it in a similar sense in an epistle to Atticus.

"Let Christians then learn in the use of this term the delightful nature of this new doctrine, and consider the distinction between the law and the gospel. This is very clearly expressed by John, 'the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ:' (John i. 17,) the distinction is between the commandments and the remission of sins, between gratuitous promises and those of a different description. The law requires perfect obedience to God, by which sins are not gratuitously pardoned, for we are not justified before God, or received into his favor according to its requirements unless we have entirely satisfied its demands. On the contrary, the gospel speaks of repentance and good works, and contains what is indeed its grand and characteristic doctrine, the promise of salvation through Jesus Christ.

"In Scripture, therefore, there are two kinds of promises; the one attaches to the law, and includes the condition of the law. For example; the law proclaims the goodness and mercy of God, but it is to those who are sinless, and human reason inculcates a similar principle. Let every one reflect within himself, and he will find that naturally he judges of God in the same manner, namely, that he is merciful, but only to the worthy and virtuous, that is, to those who are without sin; and cannot be persuaded that they can please God when they are unholy and unworthy. So that as the law and its promises are conditional, they leave the conscience in a state of doubtful anxiety.

"The other description of promise is peculiar to the gospel not deriving its condition from the law that is to say, not given upon the condition of fulfilling the law, but gratuitously bestowed for the sake of Christ and including the forgiveness of sin reconciliation and justification before God. These blessings are certain, and not dependant on the condition of fulfilling the law; for were we to suppose it necessary, in order to obtain the remission of sins to fulfil the law, we should justly despair. Hence these blessings are freely bestowed, and not as a reward for our worthiness or merit; not however without a meritorious sacrifice on our behalf, for Christ gave himself for us as a propitiation for our sins, that for his sake we might be accepted of God.

Good Works. "Five questions are proposed:—

1. What good works ought we to do?—The reply is, summarily, not only external acts of morality, but whatever is commanded by God and comprised within the decalogue.

2. How can we do them?—By the effectual aid of the Holy Spirit, who can enable us to render an internal and spiritual obedience—a service of *the heart* to God.

3. In what manner are our good works *acceptable* to God?—Christians are exceedingly desirous of this, but are at the same time deeply conscious of their imperfections, infirmities, and corruptions, as Paul says, 'the evil that I would not that I do.' Rom. vii. 19. After admitting all this in the fullest extent, the reply is, that notwithstanding all the imperfection and infirmity of the Christian in the present state, and his incapacity to perform that perfect obedience which the divine law requires, he is nevertheless acceptable to God, for the sake of Christ the Mediator, who presents our prayers to the Father as our intercessor, and remits the infirmity and unworthiness of our services. Peter maintains this sentiment, 'offering spiritual sacrifices *acceptable to God by Jesus Christ*.' 1 Pet. ii. 5.

4. For what reasons ought we to perform good works?—Many present themselves, arising *first*, out of the necessity of duty and the command of heaven, that we do not grieve the Holy Spirit and injure our own consciences or incur punishment; *secondly*, from a consideration of dignity; not the dignity or merit of our works, but of our character and persons as servants of God; the dignity of our vocation of which the apostle speaks, as the magistrate or minister ought to magnify his office, and to be loyal and diligent in the discharge of it; *thirdly*, as an evidence and assurance of our reconciliation with God and the enjoyment of a gratuitous pardon through the love of his Son. Such as obey God, have the promise of eternal life; 'Godliness hath the promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.' 1 Tim. iv. 8. The Scripture abounds with promises to believers, inclusive of temporal, spiritual, and eternal blessings.

5. What difference exists between the nature of different sins, since it is confessed there are remains of depravity in the most holy of Christians?—Some kinds of sins are sins of infirmity only, sins which

the regenerate person resists and abhors; but others are sins *against conscience*, grace is forfeited, the Holy Spirit grieved, faith lost, that is, the confidence we ought to cherish in the mercy of God. The apostle Paul says, 'If ye live after the flesh ye shall die, but if ye through the spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live,' that is, if ye obey wicked affections ye shall be exposed to the divine displeasure and to eternal death. It is said in the same chapter, 'As many as are led by the Spirit of God they are the sons of God;' but such as commit sin against their consciences, grieve and drive away the Spirit of God, for they are no longer the children of God. 'Be not deceived, neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate . . . . shall inherit the kingdom of God.' John says, 'He that committeth sin is of the devil.' Rom. viii. 13, 14. 1 Cor. vi. 9. 1 John iii. 8.

KINGDOM OF CHRIST. "The gospel plainly teaches us that the kingdom of Christ is spiritual, that is to say, Christ being seated at the right hand of the Father intercedes for us, pardons the sins of his church, and bestows the Holy Spirit on those who believe in him and approach God in his name; whom he sanctifies and will raise again at the last day to everlasting life. And that we may obtain these blessings, the ministry of the gospel is appointed by which mankind are called to the knowledge of Jesus Christ. But the true church will always suffer persecution from the wicked to the end of time, and in the church itself the good and the evil will continue blended together. It is necessary therefore to reject the old Jewish error revived by the Anabaptists of this age, that in the last times the church will become a worldly empire in which Christians will reign, destroying the wicked by force of arms, and seizing upon all the kingdoms and sovereignties of the earth.

PRAYER. There is an essential difference between genuine prayer as offered to God by his real church and the prayers of Pagans, Mahometans, and Jews. This difference arises from two sources, the one respects the essence of God of which they form no just conceptions, and the other the means of acceptance with him, namely, by Jesus Christ the Mediator.

"This subject may be divided into five parts:—

1. In approaching God by prayer, it is requisite to consider WHO and WHAT HE IS to whom we address ourselves. Let us reflect there is no other God, and that from the very commencement of time he has manifested himself to his church by the word of his truth and the Son of his love, Christ our Mediator.

2. Let us remember that prayer is A COMMANDED DUTY. We are not to imagine that murder, theft, adultery, are the only sins; it is one of the greatest of sins, not to render to God that service he demands, not to supplicate his throne, not to depend upon his aid in our necessities, and not to express our gratitude for the blessings we receive.

3. It is proper for a Christian to recur to THE PROMISES, that he may know that God hears and *why* he bears us, though we are unworthy, and merit of ourselves the severest punishments. The promises in their proper order, include the remission of sins and reconciliation with God, the communication of all spiritual and all temporal blessings. Inexpressible kindness! Boundless mercy to the church! He commands us to ask mercies, and then adds an ample promise to encourage us to pray! But how surprising is the folly and weakness of the human heart, to draw back instead of approaching God! Nevertheless the innumerable examples and promises of Scripture excite us to dismiss our doubts, to approach God through his beloved Son, and not to imagine that his promises are as the Epicureans suppose, mere idle words. Surely the Divine Being has not given so many indubitable manifestations of himself for no purpose; he has not declared his will in vain; but would have our ignorance and our doubts removed by his word. Taulerus very justly remarks, 'that the mind of man is never so eagerly disposed to pray, but God is still more ready to give.'

4. It is necessary that FAITH should accompany application; for it is for the purpose of increasing our faith that the promises are given. In reference to *spiritual blessings* which God has expressly promised, as the remission of sins, deliverance from the dominion of sin, and from eternal death, the gift of the Holy Spirit and eternal life, no condition is subjoined: those who repent of their sins and believe in Christ may rest assured of divine favor. Faith must also mingle with our request for *temporal blessings;* and we must recollect three things—*first*, that God is truly the source and dispenser of these favors, that we do not possess them by chance, that we cannot certainly secure them by any personal exertion or diligence; they are absolutely the gifts of God, and of him we must solicit life, protection, peace, tranquillity, prosperity in our different callings and bodily health. *Secondly*, although it is the will of God that his church and people should be subject to afflictions, yet he will certainly bestow temporal good so far as is requisite for their support and preservation. *Thirdly*, it is the will of God that when we request temporal blessings, our faith in the great reconciliation should be exercised and increased.

5. Let US RENEW AND REPEAT OUR REQUESTS: for it IS honorable to the character of God to trust in him continually amidst our diversified afflictions, and to rely upon his hearing those who supplicate his throne."

The transactions relating to the abolition of private masses, constitute a very important part of the proceedings of this extraordinary year. It afforded the highest satisfaction to Luther in his retirement to find that the Augustinian friars, at Wittemberg, had ventured upon an attempt to abolish the popish mode of celebrating private masses; but the Elector felt some alarm, and deputed Pontanus, one of his counsellors, to remonstrate with the church and university upon their proceedings. Melancthon was chosen, with five others, Justus Jonas, John Doltz, Andrew Carlostadt, Jerome Schurff, and Nicholas Amsdorff, to investigate the business; and in their report, they not only expressed their approbation of this zeal, but urged the Elector "to put an end to the popish masses throughout his whole territory, and not to be deterred by the reproaches of those who would brand him with the name of *Heretic*, or *Hussite;* this Christ required of the Elector, whose mind he had enlightened with the knowledge of the truth above all other princes." The Elector directed professor Bayer to return an answer, importing, that "he was desirous of acting like a Christian prince, for the glory of God and the establishment of his gospel, but that he thought nothing ought to be done with precipitation: that the truth would be discovered by others, and he might then undertake the change; and that as many churches and monasteries had been founded for the purpose of saying masses, it should be considered whether upon their abolition their revenues might not be withheld—but that as he was only a layman, he desired them to consult with the rulers of the church and university, that every thing might be peaceably settled."

To this they replied in a manner worthy of themselves and of the noble cause in which they were engaged, stating that "they adhered to their former opinion given against private masses, that they

could be abolished as they believed without tumult or scandal; but if not they were instructed by Christ to *let them alone, for they are blind leaders of the blind;* and by the apostles to *obey God rather than men.* From the beginning of the world it had always been found that a small proportion of mankind acknowledged the truth, and according to the testimony of Christ himself, the gospel was to be preached to the weak, the few, the despised, and the unlearned; so that it was not surprising that priests and the wise of this world, apprehensive of losing their power, dignity, and other advantages, should not admit the preaching of the truth, or consent to wise and pious changes, unless they were likely to become sources of emolument to themselves. The ancient colleges and monasteries were founded not for the purpose of saying masses, but for the instruction of youth and the support of the poor: and that, even to the time of Augustine and Bernard. These institutions were only appropriated to masses within these three or four hundred years, and for the dead scarcely two hundred. Still they ought to be abolished as errors, even though they could boast of great antiquity. Besides, the very principle on which masses are celebrated is sinful, namely, that they are good works, sacrifices, or satisfactions for sin. It appeared that even to the time of Cyprian, it was the custom to receive the sacrament in *both kinds*, and that this practice prevails even to the present day in Greece and the eastern churches. It was not therefore their fault if tumult should arise; but *they* were to be censured, who, to keep up their dignity, their income, and their luxury, continue to obstruct the light of truth, and cruelly wage war against the altars of God. Christ predicted and his apostles experienced that the gospel was a *stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence.* The Christian rule was neither to regard the madness of the enemy, nor the greatness of the danger. Christ was not silent, though he foresaw the preaching of the gospel would be attended with discord, seditions, and the revolution of kingdoms; nor were his apostles less strenuous in instructing the people, because the wise men of the world detested the very name of the gospel, looking upon it as the firebrand of those disturbances, schisms, and tumults, which raged amongst the Jews at Jerusalem." The result of these communications was, that though the timid Elector refused to give them a public sanction, he connived at these innovations.

The life of Leo X. terminated with the closing year.

CHAPTER VI.

The Anabaptists—Disturbances of Carlostadt—Luther's return to Wittemberg—Account of his German version of the Scriptures, with the assistance of Melancthon and others—Luther's conference with Stubner—His letter of apology for stealing Melancthon's MS. copy of his Commentary on the Romans—Extracts from that Commentary—Progress of the Reformation—Rise of the Sacramental Controversy—Death of Muncer—Melancthon's excursion in Germany—Death of Mosellanus—His Epitaph—Melancthon's introduction to the Landgrave of Hesse—Death of Nesenus—His Epitaph—Death of Frederic the Wise—Translated extracts from Melancthon's Funeral Oration—His Epitaph—Luther's Marriage—Controversy with Erasmus—Melancthon's visits to Nuremberg to found an Academy—Translated extracts of his Oration at the opening of the Institution—Publications. 1522 to 1525.

Fanaticism soon made her unwelcome appearance in this season of religious commotion. In the spring of 1522, Nicholas Storck, Martin Cellarius, and Mark Stubner, who had been for some time engaged with the notorious Muncer in propagating the wildest sentiments at Zwickau, in Misnia, came to Wittemberg. The former was a zealous leader of this enthusiastic band. They had harangued the populace in the church of St. Catharine, and pretending to enjoy visions and inspirations from heaven, acquired a very considerable ascendancy over the minds of an ignorant populace. Storck imagined he had seen an angel in a vision, who among other things, said he would be elevated to Gabriel's seat, from which Storck supposed that he was to become the head of a new empire.

These persons have been usually designated by the term Anabaptists, on account of their denying the validity of infant baptism; a name sufficiently vague and inappropriate, as this sentiment, even if it were acknowledged to be erroneous, cannot with any candor be classed amongst their *fanatical* opinions. This epithet is deduced from their representing the office of magistracy as subversive of their spiritual liberty, affirming that civil distinctions, such as rank, birth, and opulence confer, ought to be abolished, that Christians may enjoy all things in common; and maintaining that they were favored with visions and revelations from heaven.

Although it was one of their principles to explode human science, Mark Subner was a man of some learning, having been a student at the University of Wittemberg. Melancthon, with his characteristic goodness, received and treated him with the utmost hospitality, patiently investigated his pretensions, and scrupulously avoided any precipitancy in his decisions. The state of his mind is obvious from a letter which at this critical juncture he addressed to the Elector. "Your highness is aware of the great and dangerous dissensions about religion which have distracted your city of Zwickau. Some have been imprisoned for their innovations, and three of the leaders have fled hither, two of them ignorant weavers, the third a man of learning. I have heard their statements; and it is astonishing what they relate of themselves as commissioned from heaven to teach; as having a familiar intercourse with God, and able to foresee future events; in a word, as having the authority of prophets and apostles. How much I am struck with this language it is not easy for me to say; but certainly I see great reason not to despise them, for they have many arguments to adduce, and something of an extraordinary spirit about them, but no one can judge so well upon the subject as Martin Luther. For the peace and glory of the church, therefore, he should have an opportunity of examining these men, especially as they appeal to him.

The Elector immediately had recourse to his most confidential counsellors, who, being unable to come to a decision, Melancthon continued to urge the necessity of obtaining Luther's sentiments, stating that Storck and his associates had raised disputes concerning the baptism of infants, and had appealed to divine revelations; and that for his own part he could not positively pronounce on the merit of the case. The Elector alleged, that were he to recall Luther it would endanger his life, and advised Melancthon to avoid disputes with those fanatics; but in the mean time if he knew what justice required, he was ready to discharge his duty. Spalatine, who was present in the council, has recorded these memorable words which the Elector pronounced in a manner that produced the deepest impression upon the whole assembly of ministers and counsellors, and which, he remarks, were expressive of his views to the very last day of his life. "This is a most weighty and difficult affair, which I as a layman do not profess to understand. God has given to me and my brother considerable wealth; but if I could obtain a right understanding of the matter, I declare I would rather take my staff in my hand and quit every thing I possess, than knowingly resist the will of God." Luther, in a letter to Melancthon, expresses himself in a very judicious manner. It was written on the 17th January. "In regard to these prophets I cannot approve of your timidity, though you are my

superior both in capacity and erudition. In the first place, when they bear record of themselves they ought not to be implicitly believed, but their spirits should be tried, as John admonishes. You know Gamaliel's advice, but I have heard of nothing said or done by them which Satan himself could not imitate. I would have you examine whether they can produce a proof of their commission, for God never sent any one, not even his own Son, who was not either properly called to the office, or authorized by miracles. The ancient prophets were legally appointed; and their mere assertion of being called by a divine revelation is not a sufficient warrant for receiving them, since God did not even speak to Samuel but with the authority of Eli. So much for their public character. You should also examine their private spirit, whether they have experienced spiritual distresses and conflicts with death and hell, and the power of regeneration. If you hear smooth, tranquil, and what they call *devout and religious raptures*, though they speak of being caught up to the third heavens, do not regard them, while the sign of the Son of Man is wanting, THE CROSS, the only touchstone of Christians, and the sure discerner of spirits."

In addition to the uneasiness occasioned by the affair of Storck and his associates, Melancthon was exceedingly afflicted by another untoward circumstance. At the very moment when union amongst themselves, and a vigilant discretion in all their proceedings was of the greatest importance, Carlostadt was guilty of excesses, which were not only disapproved by the other Reformers, but highly prejudicial to their cause. He was heard to say, that "he wished to be as great a man and as much thought of as Luther;" for which he was properly reproved by Melancthon, who reminded him, "that such language could only proceed from a spirit of emulation, envy, and pride." So long as he steadily pursued the great object of reforming the church from Popery by sound argument, and firm but Christian conduct, the other Reformers united to assist his efforts; but when motives of vanity, concurring with violence of temper, occasioned his zeal to degenerate into wild-fire and extravagance, they were compelled to discountenance him. But instead of being induced to correct his errors, he instantly aspired to become the leader of a turbulent mobility, whose minds he inflamed by popular harangues, and whom he encouraged to enter the great church of All Saints at Wittemberg, to break the crucifixes and images in pieces, and throw down the altars. Mislead by a strange spirit of infatuation, he began to despise human learning, and to encourage the youths of the University to quit their studies. Yet, with all this perversion of mind and impetuosity of conduct, which no remonstrances could check, it must be admitted that he held some important truths, particularly the real doctrine of the Sacrament, which the Lutherans misunderstood, and which afterwards occasioned violent controversies. And yet, even in maintaining acknowledged truth, his *manner* of doing it was equally disapproved by the gentle Melancthon and the impetuous Luther. The former, who was never addicted to exaggeration, represents him in a most unamiable light, as "a man of savage disposition, of no genius and learning, or even common sense; as having plotted against the reputation of Luther out of revenge for his opposing his fanatical practices; but at the same time as possessing a very insinuating and plausible exterior, though unable to disguise his violent ambition, passion, and envy, for any long period."

The state of Luther's mind during these transactions can be more easily imagined than expressed. Every day increased his anxieties, every occurrence excited fresh alarm. The foundations of that noble structure he had been so actively engaged in erecting seemed to be endangered. What could be done? Was he to remain at a distance from the scene of action at a period when his skill and heroism appeared peculiarly requisite; or could he venture upon incurring the Elector's displeasure by a clandestine and unauthorized return? Restless with increasing impatience he determined to hazard every thing, and at length on the 3d of March, 1522, hastened to Wittemberg. An apology for this proceeding was written to the Elector, pleading the urgent necessity of the case arising out of the existing irregularities; but in two other communications, the one a letter addressed to Melancthon and the other to Amsdorff, he assigns an additional reason for his return, namely, the assistance he wished to obtain from them and others in the translation of the Scriptures into the German language.

For the purpose of engaging in this important labor, Luther had devoted the previous summer to the study of Greek and Hebrew. His skill in German is universally admitted. Versions of a very inferior kind had been published at Nuremberg in the years 1477, 1483, 1490, and at Augsburg in 1518, which were not only ill calculated to attract public notice, but interdicted from being read. The gospels of Matthew and Mark were first published by Luther, then the Epistle to the Romans and the other books in succession, till the whole New Testament was circulated by the month of September. In a letter which Melancthon addressed to the celebrated physician George Sturciad, dated 5th May, 1522, he speaks of the whole version being in the hands of the printers. The essential assistance he rendered in completing the work is likewise apparent, for he states that he had paid particular attention to the different kinds of money mentioned in the New Testament, and had consulted with many learned men that the version might express them with the utmost accuracy. He begs his correspondent to give his opinion, and to consult Mutianus as being profoundly skilled in the knowledge of Roman antiquities. He entreats him to attend to his application from a regard to the general good, and to do it immediately, because the work was in the press and printing with great expedition. "I wait your reply," he adds, "with the utmost anxiety, and I beseech you for faith, love, and kindness' sake, and every other urgent consideration, not to disappoint us."

The difficulties of the undertaking particularly pressed upon Luther when he proceeded to the translation of the Old Testament, but he persevered with indefatigable zeal. Melancthon was deeply engaged in revising this important work for his friend two months previous to his return.

The utmost pains were taken to ensure the accuracy of the translation, for a select party of learned men at Wittemberg assembled every day with Luther to revise every sentence; and they have been known to return *fourteen successive days, to the reconsideration of a single line or even a word.* Each had an appropriate part assigned him according to his peculiar qualification. Luther collated the ancient Latin versions and the Hebrew, Melancthon the Greek original, Cruciger the Chaldee, and other professors the Rabbinical writings. At the request of Luther, Spalatine afforded them every assistance, by sending them specimens from the Elector's collection of gems. The Pentateuch went to press in December, and a second edition of the New Testament appeared at the same time. A version of the Prophets was published in the year 1527, and the other books in succession till the whole laborious task was completed in 1530. Luther

states how much he was indebted to his particular friend in writing to Spalatinus. "I translated not only the gospel of John, but the whole New Testament in my Patmos, but Melancthon and I have begun to revise the whole, and by the blessing of God it will prove a noble labor, but your assistance is sometimes requisite to suggest apt words and turns of expression. We wish it to be distinguished for simplicity of style." The whole was republished in a new edition in 1534, which was followed by others in 1541 and 1545. The names of Luther's principal coadjutors in this great undertaking ought to be had in everlasting remembrance—PHILIP MELANCTHON, CASPER CRUCIGER, JUSTUS JONAS, JOHN BUGENHAGIUS or POMERANUS, and MATTHEW AUROGALLUS: the corrector of the press was GEORGE RORARIUS.

After completing this translation of the Scriptures into the German language, Bugenhagius annually kept the return of the day on which it was finished, by inviting a select party of friends to his house in order to celebrate so important an achievement. This social meeting was usually designated THE FESTIVAL OF THE TRANSLATION OF THE SCRIPTURES.

To the fastidious we must leave it to censure the desire which may probably glow, at least for a moment, in many a bosom, to have been contemporary with these benevolent spirits, to have shared their noble labor, and to have annually participated in their pious convivialities. Never was a festive board more nobly surrounded or more religiously devoted —never did a more splendid occasion of holy triumph present itself. Germany had already hailed her Reformers, heard their discourses, and witnessed their progress with mingled emotions of fear and satisfaction;—already was she deeply indebted to them for a series of disinterested efforts to deliver her from the abject slavery in which superstition and tyranny had combined to chain her down during past ages; but a new obligation of far greater extent was incurred by their furnishing to every man the means of the most direct acquaintance with divine communications through his vernacular language. Nor was the mere accomplishment of this difficult undertaking the only subject of generous exultation to these eminent men, every year and almost every day exhibited great and good effects resulting from their labor. "The different parts of this translation," observes Mosheim, vol. iv. page 60, "being successively and gradually spread abroad among the people, produced sudden and almost incredible effects, and extirpated root and branch, the erroneous principles and superstitious doctrines of the church of Rome, from the minds of a prodigious number of persons."

Let us pause for a moment to reflect on the wonderful concatenation of a few past events by the invisible but efficacious agency of a superintending Providence. Leo X. had issued a Bull against Luther which totally failed of its object; the Pope exasperated at witnessing his own impotency, appealed to Charles V. newly promoted to the empire upon the death of Maximilian I. to inflict exemplary vengeance upon his heretical subject; Charles being under personal obligations to Frederic Elector of Saxony, who had materially assisted his advancement in opposition to his rival Francis I. king of France, was disposed to concede to his wishes by refraining from the publication of a condemnatory edict, but, not to offend the Pope, he resolved to summon Luther to the diet at Worms as a previous and prudential measure:—at Worms he appeared, where he breathed the spirit of an apostle and exhibited the heroism of a martyr; but he was declared an enemy to the holy Roman empire and became instantly exposed to its vengeance. At this crisis Frederic screened him from the storm, by a friendly seizure and imprisonment at the castle of Wartenberg, *by which means*, while his sudden disappearance operated to the benefit of the reformed cause, by exasperating the minds of men against the Roman See for a supposed violation of its promise of security, his confinement furnished him with leisure which even had his life been spared, he could not otherwise have enjoyed at such a turbulent moment, for prosecuting the study of original languages, and preparing for the translation of the holy Scriptures into the vernacular language of Germany. While his enemies and countrymen thought him dead and his particular friends lamented his absence, trembled for his safety, and mourned over the calamitous circumstances in which they became involved, the Providence of God had unexpectedly and at the fittest moment set him about a work in the forests of Thuringia, which was hereafter to gladden the hearts of Germany, and more than any other circumstance to promote the Reformation; and thus, amidst a universal pause of wonder and apprehension, God was mysteriously and secretly operating his own purposes.

It was to be expected that the Catholics should endeavor to disparage the version of Luther, and yet Maimbourg confesses it was elegant and very generally read, although Jerome Emser, one of the counsellors of Duke George, of persecuting notoriety, and Cochlæus, attacked it in terms of bitter reproach. The former, under the patronage of his master, published what he called a correct translation of the New Testament in opposition to it, and which as it consisted of little else than a republication of Luther's very version almost verbatim, but with a *preface of his own*, was in reality the highest compliment he could have paid to his antagonist, and the most effectual condemnation of himself. The result however of this animosity was most gratifying to every pious mind. Luther's version was read even in the pages of his adversary; and he expresses himself upon the occasion in language which strikingly illustrates his character, "There is a just judge who will see to this. The best revenge which I can wish for is, that though *Luther's* NAME is suppressed, and that of his adversary put in its place, yet *Luther's* BOOK is read, and thus the design of his labors is promoted by his very enemies."

This German translation of the Scriptures was proscribed by an edict of Ferdinand, archduke of Austria, the emperor's brother, forbidding the subjects of his imperial majesty to have any copy of it in their possession. The same interdiction extended to all his writings. Several princes issued similar prohibitions, among whom we can feel no surprise at discovering Duke George, but with what kind of *effect*—such as are acquainted with the history of persecution may easily conjecture.

Soon after his return from the castle of Wartenberg, Luther consented to hold a conference in the presence of Melancthon with some of the chief fanatical pretenders to prophetic inspiration before mentioned. Mark Stubner, Cellarius and another, met the reformer and his friend on this occasion. Stubner related his visions and inspirations to very patient hearers, and when he had finished, Luther coolly replied, "that nothing he had said was supported by the authority of Scripture, but seemed to result from a deluded imagination, or the suggestions of some evil spirit." This enraged Cellarius, who with the voice and gesticulations of a madman, stamping the ground and beating the table, exclaimed against the audacity of Luther for insinuating such things against so *divine* a person! Stubner, however, was more composed, possibly fancying himself in a *tranquil and devout rapture*. "Lu-

ther," says he, "I will give you a proof that I am influenced by the Spirit of God, by revealing your own thoughts. *You are at this moment inclining to believe in the truth of my doctrine.*" The prophet however was mistaken, for Luther afterwards affirmed he was thinking of that sentence, "the Lord rebuke thee, Satan;" and he very soon dismissed them with these words, "The God whom I love and serve will confound your impotent pretensions." They retired full of self-sufficiency, pouring out execrations upon Luther, and promising what mighty things they would do to demonstrate the reality of their commission. They left Wittemberg the same day.

A genuine FANATIC is one of the most pitiable objects in creation; a compound of ignorance and enthusiasm. Enflamed with self-importance, he mistakes the conceits of his own disordered imagination for the dictates of inspiration, and fancies his intercourse with the Deity to be of a sublimer nature than that of his inferior fellow mortals. He believes himself gifted above others, destined to move in a higher sphere, to walk in the precincts of heaven, to hold an immediate connection with the Divine Spirit, which elevates him above the laws and ordinances, the instructions and the guidance of Scripture. But sure nothing can be more degrading to reason than such absurdities, nothing more disparaging to religion. The mischief such a person is calculated to do results from this circumstance, that he denominates passion by the sacred name of religion; a passion which, heated to intemperance and kindling into the ardors of rapture, spurns at reason, and substitutes a man's own fancy and good opinion of himself for the true foundation of piety. When such sentiments as these prevail, it is impossible to calculate or to conjecture the monstrous excesses into which they may precipitate the ignorant classes of mankind, who are soon attracted by plausible, however ridiculous, novelties. But genuine religion and wild fanaticism are perfect antipodes; and intelligent persons, of an observing cast of mind, will always look upon the latter as a beacon to warn them away from the dangers attending *any* deviation from the plain course of scriptural instruction.

Should any be disposed to censure the conduct of Melancthon for that extreme leniency which he manifested to Storck and his associates from Zwickau, be it recollected, that though Luther's zeal charged him with undue *timidity*, a word which both he and historians after him have applied with great incaution, several extenuating circumstances must not be overlooked. Stubner being a man of learning, and probably of some address, and knowing the importance of obtaining, if possible, the influence of Melancthon, probably resorted to every insinuating method to gain his support, disclosing his sentiments only in a very gradual manner. The real goodness and amiable temper for which Melancthon was so remarkable, predisposed him to judge favorably of others, especially if they were professedly in pursuit of truth. He was himself a diligent and patient inquirer. It was a period of religious discovery, and he daily felt that he had much to learn. The very extravagances of these prophets were not more abhorrent to the present views of the reformers, than the tenets of Lutheranism were to the mind of Luther himself at a previous and not very remote period of his life. Every impartial person must perceive, what many transactions hereafter to be recorded will fully prove, that the hesitation of Melancthon in deciding upon new subjects or in difficult cases which seemed to require a promptitude of action, resulted not so much from *timidity*, as from *conscientious scruples of mind*. It was not that he feared temporal, but moral consequences; and though Luther may be excused in a period when the mind was habitually kept warm and irascible by controversy, for using such an epithet, those who are solicitous of forming a correct idea of him will rather deem it slanderous than descriptive to call him the *timid* Melancthon. If, after all, his first treatment of Storck and his associates be considered as an unwarrantable excess of candor, his language became more decided as his convictions of their delusion and misconduct increased: and if this be a shade in his character, it is otherwise so bright that the admitted imperfection will not materially obscure it; and the biographer can feel no very powerful temptation where such a splendor of excellence is discernable, to become the labored apologist.

Luther, besides many useful tracts of his own, having secretly taken from Melancthon a manuscript Commentary on *the Epistle of Paul to the Romans*, printed it without his knowledge. It was afterwards published in the year 1540, with a dedication to Philip, landgrave of Hesse. Luther's apology for this proceeding is curious and characteristic. It is prefixed to the Commentary of his friend.

"Martin Luther to Philip Melancthon—grace and peace in Christ.

"'Be angry and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed and be still.' I am the person who dares to publish your annotations, and I send you your own work. If you are not pleased with it, it may be all very well, it is sufficient that you please us. If I have done wrong, *you* are to blame; why did not you publish it yourself? why did you suffer me so often to ask, to insist, to importune you to publish it, and all in vain?—So much for my apology *against* you; for you see I am willing to turn thief, and am not afraid of your future accusations or complaints. As to those whom you suspect of being disposed to sneer, I have this to say to them—'*Do better!*'—What the impious Thomists *falsely* arrogate to their leader, namely, that no one has written better upon St. Paul, I *truly* affirm of you. Satan himself influences them to boast in this manner concerning their Thomas Aquinas, and to spread his doctrines and his poison far and wide. I know in what sort of spirit and with what correctness of judgment I pronounce this of you. If these famous and mighty men should choose to sneer at my opinion, the consequence belongs to me, not to you. But I wish to vex these scorners more and more; and I say that the commentaries of Jerome and Origen are mere trifles and follies compared to your annotations. But what, you will say, is the purpose of aiming to provoke these great men against me? Well—you may be humble if you please, but let me boast for you. Who has ever prohibited persons of great capacity from publishing something better *if they can*—and thus demonstrating the rashness of my judgment. For my part, I wish we could find out those who could and would publish something better. I threaten you, further, to steal and publish your remarks upon Genesis and the Gospels of Matthew and John, unless you supersede me by bringing them forward. You say, Scripture ought to be read alone and without a commentary; this is right enough if you speak in reference to Jerome, Origen, Thomas Aquinas, and others of the same class, for their commentaries are the mere vehicles of their own notions, rather than the sentiments of Paul, and the doctrine of Christianity; but no one can properly call yours a commentary; it is rather an introduction to the study of Scripture in general, and a guide to the knowledge of Christ: in which it surpasses all the commentaries hitherto published. As to what you plead, that your annotations are not in all respects satisfactory to yourself, it is difficult

enough to believe you. But behold I do believe—you are not fully satisfied with yourself, nor is this asked or desired of you: we would have Paul maintain his pre-eminence, lest any one should insinuate that Philip is superior or equal to Paul. It is sufficient you are only second to Paul; but we shall not dislike any body for coming still nearer to this great original. We know very well that you are nothing; and we know also that Christ is all and in all, who if he pleases can speak as he did to Balaam by an ass; why then should he not speak by a man?—art thou not a man?—art thou not a servant of Christ?—has he not endowed thee with capacity? If thou shouldest choose to improve and enlarge this volume by elegant and learned additions, it will be a grateful service; but in the mean time we are determined to be gratified in spite of you, by possessing ourselves of the sentiments of Paul by your means. If I have offended you by this proceeding, I do not ask pardon; but lay aside your displeasure, by which you will rather give offence to *us*, and *you* will have to ask forgiveness. God preserve and prosper you for evermore. *Wittemberg*, July 29, 1522."

If Luther did not ask pardon for publishing Melancthon's annotations on the Epistle of Paul to the Romans without his consent, the reader will not demand an apology for inserting a few brief extracts from this valuable performance: as a specimen of our reformer's expository method, which in giving a complete view of his character and talents, could not be wholly omitted.

"CHAP. I. v. 1.—'*Paul . . . . . separated unto the gospel of God.*' Here the apostle states the business he was commanded to execute, namely, to preach the gospel. The reader should remember that there is a material difference between the law and the gospel, to which we have already adverted, and of which more will be said in remarking upon the third chapter. The description which he gives of the gospel is, that it is a divine promise communicated in the sacred writings concerning Jesus Christ the Son of God, of the seed of David according to the flesh, declared to be the Son of God with power, through sanctification of the Spirit, and resurrection from the dead; that he is the Messiah or King, by whom deliverance from sin and eternal life are dispensed.

"This description will be more obvious by noticing the contradistinction between the law and the gospel. The law represents what we are, and what we are required to do. It demands perfect obedience, without providing for the forgiveness of sin, or liberating us from the power of sin and death; but rather arms sin against us, by accusing transgressors, and alarming them with the terrors of death. But the GOSPEL freely promises the remission of sin and deliverance from death, by Jesus the Son of God, who was descended from David according to the prophetic declarations. Paul states this at the outset of his discourse, that we might know his meaning, and distinguish properly between the law and the gospel; as though he had said, 'Paul divinely called to teach the gospel of Christ; not to teach the law or to teach philosophy.'

"3, 4.—'*Concerning the Son Jesus Christ our Lord, &c.*' In this phrase he opposes the vulgar notions of the Jews, who expected a Messiah that would be—not *the Son of God by his own nature*, but only *a man like the other prophets*, though surpassing them in wisdom, virtue, and capacity to obtain and govern the whole world. But the patriarchs and prophets knew their Messiah to be the *Son of God*, who was at that period their governor and their guide. Jacob said, 'The angel who delivered me out of all evil bless the lads,' speaking of the deliverer whom he knew to be promised, and whose proper office is to deliver out of all evil. Jacob, Moses, Daniel, saw him by faith, and John testifies that the Messiah was the Son of God, and constantly present with the patriarchs. 'In the beginning,' says he, 'was the word, ... all things were made by him'—referring to those illustrious victories over the devil which this glorious leader and captain enabled Noah, Abram, Joseph, Moses, Samuel, David, Isaiah, and Jeremiah to obtain.

"The term *oristhentos*, which the Greeks explain by another, *apodeichthentos*, is singularly emphatical, and it refers to the manifestation of the Son of God, as having risen from the dead, and as being possessed of inconceivable power, evinced by numerous miracles.

"The verb *orizesthai*, signifies to be certainly proclaimed; in opposition to the opinions of the Jews, who expected a Messiah to be an extraordinary man indeed, but only a man, distinguished by heroic achievements, and who should bestow riches, but not a *new nature and eternal life*. But Paul says that this Messiah would be powerful, and would give the Holy Spirit by which new light, justification and eternal life would be dispensed, and the devil vanquished. This he calls a real deliverance, which our forefathers both understood and experienced in the various trials of their faith, their dangers, and their conflicts with Satan and with death. And how much greater is this deliverance than that which some anticipate in the appearance of a Messiah, who like Alexander is to divide kingdoms and provinces amongst his soldiers.

"CHAP. V. v. 2.—'*We rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*' It may be asked, what is the value of justification and deliverance from sin and death, when sin still adheres to us, and we continue obnoxious to death, and all the various afflictions incident to human life? In what respects are Christians happier than others? for Christians are often derided for speaking about deliverance from sin and death, when they are equally with other men exposed to calamities. Saints themselves are often ready to acknowledge their infirmities, and are agitated with doubts whether if God really delighted in them, they should be the subjects of such infirmity; and this is no trifling temptation, because when faith realizes, according to the Scriptures, that God is propitious through Jesus Christ, our weakness expects to see this kindness in some manner visibly displayed. So the Anabaptists despise the doctrine of faith, and affirm that we are to seek for celestial visions; and there are others who dream they have already perfectly obeyed, and are acceptable to God, as having satisfied the claims of his law, and being without sin.

"Paul therefore opposes each of these. He administers consolation to those who acknowledge their infirmities, and commands them to rejoice in hope; and to consider that they shall enjoy the glory of eternal life, which though not at present revealed, shall certainly be bestowed. On which account it became them to acquiesce, and not to doubt or despair, though they were at present exposed to infirmities. He directs them to rejoice *in hope*, that is, they are not to suppose that this perfection of nature and enjoyment is now to be attained, nor are they to expect any new manifestaitons from heaven, but to stand fast in the truth of Scripture, and aim to please God by faith in Christ, considering that a present perfection in this sinful state is not to be expected.

"The sentiment therefore is, that although the world, and even our own reason, may determine that we do not yet possess glory, or complete emancipation from sin and death, yet we rejoice, that is, we indulge the hope of that glory with which God

will eventually distinguish us. We cleave to this hope, for it is not fallacious.

"3.—'*And not only so, but we glory in tribulation also,*' &c. He, as it were, corrects the former statement. We have not only a glory in expectation, but in present possession; and what was it? *Affliction.* He is opposing the opinions and reasonings of the world.

"In the view of the world we are afflicted: we seem abandoned and rejected by God; and this reproach upon the gospel deters the generality of mankind from embracing it. This mode of reasoning indeed seems legitimate enough—afflictions are curses, that is, evils: and therefore signs of God's displeasure. But Paul on the contrary assures us that they are not curses, but are proper occasions of glorying; for they are not signs of the divine displeasure, but intimations of the love of God.

"We have then a double glory—the one which is the greatest is in expectation, consisting in the renovation of our nature, and the enjoyment of eternal life; but this glory we possess in hope: the other glory is in present possession, and it consists in affliction: for although the world judges that affliction is an evidence of divine anger, yet we know it to be an indication of his love; and obedience to his afflictive dispensations to be a new and acceptable kind of worship.

"Four things, therefore, ought to be well impressed upon our minds respecting afflictions:

"1. They are appointed. We do not suffer affliction by chance, but by the determinate counsel and permission of God.

"2. By means of affliction God punishes his people, not that he may destroy them, but to recal them to repentance, and the exercise of faith: for afflictions are not indications of displeasure, but of kindness—'He willeth not the death of a sinner.'

"3. God requires us to submit to his afflictive dispensations, and to expend our indignation and impatience upon our own sins; and since he determines to afflict his church in the present state, submission tends to glorify his name.

"4. Resignation however is not all; he requires faith and prayer, that we may both seek and expect divine assistance. Thus he admonishes us, 'Call upon me in the day of trouble, I will answer thee, and thou shalt glorify me.'

"These four considerations are applicable to all our afflictions, and are calculated if properly regarded, to produce that truly Christian patience which essentially differs from mere philosophical endurance.

"Chap. VIII. *v.* 3.—'*God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, for sin condemned sin in the flesh.*' It is elsewhere stated, he was '*Made sin for us.*' These words are peculiarly emphatical—Christ is represented as being *made sin* or a *sacrifice for sin:* it is a Hebrew form of expression, corresponding with the Latin term *piaculum*, and the Greek *katharma*. A similar idea is conveyed in the use of the word *curse* or *anathema*, and which signifies any thing devoted to punishment in order to propitiate the offended deity. In this manner Isaiah speaks of Christ, 'thou didst make his soul a *sin*,' that is, an offering or sacrifice for sin: and Paul frequently inculcates the same sentiment in his second epistle and fifth chapter of the Corinthians, 'He who knew no sin was made *sin* for us,' that is, *an offering* or *victim* who sustained the punishment of sin and satisfied the demands of justice for us. In writing to the Galatians he suggests a similar sentiment, 'Christ was made *a curse*,' that is, *piaculum, a sacrifice*, sustaining the curse and displeasure of God against sin.

"22.—'*We know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.*' This is an argument from the example of the creation. All things are subject to corruption and to the abuse of the wicked till the period of deliverance, which therefore we expect.

"In this place, Paul contemplates with great emotion of mind the dreadful confusion and corruption of human affairs, war, bloodshed, devastation and other evils prevalent in the world. He contemplates the mighty power of sin and the tyranny of Satan, and how degrading it is that universal nature should be subjected to the devil and to death in consequence of human transgression.

"Here then in the first place is to be considered the feelings of Christians amidst their afflictions. Delay is tormenting to the mind, and we are incapable of foreseeing the method of deliverance. Troubles are daily increasing and the truly pious are deeply afflicted to witness the great dangers which surround the church of Christ; and while its distresses multiply, its deliverance appears to be delayed.

"Whatever therefore may be the source of our grief, whether public or private, the apostle endeavors to impart consolation by referring us to the heavens and the earth, to the creation at large as subjected to the abuse of the wicked. Tyrants possess the dominion of empires—the impious enjoy the riches of the world, but the church of Christ for which all things were created, suffers martyrdom and is deprived of life, light, and every other advantage. But these things were formed that they might be in subserviency to the saints for the glory of God, and as they are at present subjected to abuse and the power of corruption through the transgression of Adam, the creatures themselves wait for the promised deliverance."———

The Popish writers agree in lamenting the increase of Lutheranism during the years 1522 and 1523; its opponents, however, amongst whom George, Duke of Saxony, Henry, Duke of Brunswick, and Ferdinand, Archduke of Austria, may be considered the principal, were by no means asleep. The former, the most violent bigot of the day, and the most inveterate enemy of Luther, and the Reformation, used every means to influence Frederic and his brother John, to adopt hostile measures: but their prudence frustrated his views in Saxony. The light spread rapidly in Europe, and Casper Hedio, Martin Bucer, and John Oecolampadius were diffusing it in Alsace and Switzerland.

Frederic, however, felt himself in a most critical situation. The Pope, Adrian VI. who had succeeded Leo X. had sent his legate Francis Cheregato to the Imperial Diet of Nuremberg, to demand the immediate execution of the sentence pronounced against Luther at the Diet of Worms. The Emperor concurred in his views, and the Popish princes were evidently concerting measures to crush the Reformation. In this situation the Elector applied to Luther, Melancthon and Bugenhagius for their opinion on this question. "Is it lawful for your prince if his subjects should be attacked on account of religion by the Emperor, or any other ruler to protect them by arms?" To this they replied, "*it was not lawful*, chiefly because the princes were not yet convinced in their consciences of the truth of the reformed doctrine, neither had their subjects implored protection against violence, nor had the states of the provinces deliberated on the subject of war: above all, those who took up arms for their defence, ought to be well satisfied of the justice of their cause."

Clement VII. being elevated to the Papal Chair upon the decease of Adrian, selected Cardinal Campeggio, a skilful negotiator for his legate to the

Imperial Diet at Nuremberg, where he arrived in the early part of the year 1524. He was commissioned to insist upon the princes uniting to execute the decree of Worms against Luther; and the Emperor gave similar instructions to his minister. After some debate it was resolved by the Diet that the Pope, with the consent of the Emperor, should at an early period summon a free council in Germany, to deliberate upon the Lutheran affairs, and that in the mean time a Diet should be held at Spires, to consider of the mode of proceeding. This of course did not satisfy Campeggio, and retiring to Ratisbon he held a private assembly with some of the princes and bishops of the empire, whom he engaged to resolve upon executing the decree of Worms. This unwarrantable procedure induced those who differed from Campeggio, to pursue a measure of self-defence, by holding a similar convention at Spires, to confirm the decrees of Nuremberg.

At this period, what has been called the *Sacramental controversy* originated. Carlostadt resolutely denied what Luther no less resolutely maintained, the doctrine of *Consubstantiation*, or that the real body and blood of Christ, were received together with the bread and the wine, though they were not absolutely transubstantiated. This controversy divided the early friends of the Reformation, and long threatened the most serious consequences. The Reformers of Switzerland, and many in Germany, dissented from Luther and Melancthon, maintaining that the Lord's Supper was to be observed only as a commemoration of the death of Christ. It must be owned that *Consubstantiation* and *Transubstantiation* are as similar in nature as in name, and it would require good spectacles to discern any very essential difference between these two species of nonsense.

Carlostadt found it necessary to retire to Orlamund, and became the pastor of the village in defiance of the right of appointment, vested in the Elector and the university, where he not only railed against Luther's view of the Eucharist, but appears to have been hurried on by his violence of temper to very enthusiastical pretensions. He was at length expelled by the prince and his brother from their dominions, but afterwards recalled by the Elector John.

Carlostadt, by raising mobs, pulling down images and railing against learning, gave the final impulse to the fanaticism of Muncer, Storck and their associates. "It may be true," says Luther, "and candor may require me to believe that Carlostadt does not *intend* to promote sedition and murder, yet so long as he persists in raising headstrong mobs and exciting them to demolish statues with unauthorized violence, he possesses the same seditious sanguinary spirit that has shown itself at Alsted. How often has Melancthon in vain admonished him not to raise tumults respecting ceremonies, and yet he has continued to defend the breakers of the peace to the last."

These irregularities, like a large tributary stream, swelled the torrent of insurrection that was at this moment rushing through the provinces of Germany. What has been termed *the Rustic war*, or *war of the Peasants*, arose indeed from the dissatisfaction of the lower classes with the civil restraints and oppressions of their chiefs, which they *affirmed* to be no longer tolerable, but it received an accession of strength and a character of fanaticism from the union of the Anabaptists, who hastened to wage war against their lawful governors and the rights of civil society. Muncer placed himself at their head, and was at last taken and put to death after being defeated by the confederate princes of Germany in a pitched battle at Mulhausen in Thuringia. This terminated the rebellion.

By the advice of his friends, who perceived it necessary to recruit his health and spirits, Melancthon devoted part of the year 1524, to a journey on horseback to different places in Germany. He was accompanied by Nesenus and Camerarius, two intimate associates, the former distinguished for prudence, knowledge and amiableness of disposition, the latter who was afterwards his biographer, for very eminent literary attainments. Two youths, Burcardus and Silberbornerus, both of whom afterwards acquired considerable reputation, attended them.

The travellers arrived at Leipsic, the first place of notoriety in their route, on the very day when Peter Mosellanus, the Greek professor, breathed his last. Melancthon and Camerarius had just time to visit him, and mingle their tears over his dying bed; the former deplored a friend, and the latter a tutor. Mosellanus was a man of erudition. He is praised by Erasmus as a wit and a scholar; and at his decease, which took place at the early age of *thirty-one*, Melancthon composed the following tribute to his memory.

Beneath this tomb that meets the stranger's eye
The dear remains of Mosellanus lie;
In vain might friends protracted life implore,
The lovely rhetorician speaks no more;
But in the records of eternal fame,
Ages to come shall find inscrib'd his name,
While from this transient life of tears and sighs
God has removed him to yon fairer skies.

Melancthon and his friends proceeded from Leipsic across Upper Saxony to Fulda, where they heard of the death of the celebrated Ulric Hutten, an ingenious and learned man, but of a most waspish temper, which was abundantly displayed in a book against Erasmus. Melancthon and Luther both disapproved his ferocious hostility. Though descended from a noble family, of which he was sufficiently vain, he died in extreme poverty at Zurich.

After visiting Frankfort, they remained some time with Melancthon's mother, who had married a second husband at Bretten. Parting at length most reluctantly from endeared relatives, they reached Heidelberg, where the university received their former student with every mark of distinction and regard.

Upon their return, not far from Frankfort, they unexpectedly met Philip, landgrave of Hesse, on his way to Heidelberg. The landgrave rode up to him, intimating that he understood his name was Philip Melancthon; to which he replied in the affirmative, and alighting from his horse, in token of respect to the illustrious stranger, he was requested to remount and turn back to spend the night with him. The prince assured him his intentions were not hostile, but simply to converse upon some particular topics. Melancthon replied in a suitable manner, and signified he entertained no apprehensions from the landgrave. "But," said he, smiling, "if I should deliver you into the hands of Campeggio, I fancy he would think me doing him a very grateful piece of service." On their way, for Melancthon had turned back in complaisance, the prince put a number of questions of a casual nature, which he answered briefly and without entering into much explanation, both on account of the unfitness of the time and place, and because the prince appeared to have his thoughts occupied with other concerns. At length he requested the prince's permission to return and prosecute his journey which he granted, stipulating that upon his arrival at Wit-

temberg, he should send him in writing, his deliberate opinion upon the subjects he had referred to in his conversation. He also gave him a safe conduct through his dominions. This inquisitive disposition of the landgrave, terminated in the happiest consequences, for he soon became the decided supporter of the Reformation. His allusion to Campeggio, was sufficiently significant, for previous to this interview, that subtle legate had sent to sound Melancthon upon the subject of coming over to the Papal party, but was dismissed with the following spirited reply—that, "what he maintained to be true and *knew* to be so, he did not embrace or avow to gain the respect and favor of any living mortal, or from the hope of emolument, or from any ambitious motives, nor would he cease to esteem and aid those who promoted it. In the exertions he had hitherto made for the knowledge and advancement of truth, he was determined in a spirit of meekness to persevere. Let all who are truly desirous of the general peace and safety of the community confer and co-operate to heal the wounds which cannot possibly be any longer concealed, and to restrain the fury of those who will not desist from tearing and fretting with their malicious nails the existing sores. If this be not done, and the violent bigots still pursue their course, they may expect to be the first to suffer."

Soon after returning to Wittemberg, Melancthon was plunged into the deepest affliction, in consequence of the tragical death of Nesenus. He was lying at his ease in a fishing boat which he had hired, as he frequently did, for the purpose of recreation on the river Elbe, and which he had fastened to the trunk of a tree. The boat suddenly heaved about and whirled him into the water, where he perished. The great men of the day, were deeply affected by this fatal accident. Luther exclaimed in the transports of grief, "O that I had power to raise the dead!"—Micyllus, by no means, says Seckendorf, a contemptible poet, honored his memory with an elegant epitaph. We insert a similar tribute from the pen of Melancthon.

How vain and fleeting is the race of man;—
And how uncertain when we yield our breath!
So sunk Nesenus 'neath the wave of death,
Nor knew the treacherous stream so near him ran.

It is known that Melancthon placed considerable confidence in dreams, and that both he and Luther were addicted to astrology. In the course of his late journey he expressed a presentiment of the death of one of the three fellow travellers, Camerarius, Nesenus, or himself, from the occurrence of what he considered an ominous circumstance; and on the very day when Nesenus was drowned, he often related to those who were inclined to be jocose upon superstitious notions, that in his afternoon's nap, he saw in a dream, every circumstance of his friend's deplorable end.

Another event of the present year was still more afflictive. Henry von Zutphen, to whom Melancthon and the whole university at Wittemberg were much attached on account of his wisdom, modesty and piety, had gone to preach the reformed doctrines in Ditmars, a county of Holstein, in Denmark; the neighboring priests like tigers watching for their prey, instantly sprung upon the victim and put him to death by the most exquisite tortures.

On the fifth of May, 1525, Frederic, Elector of Saxony, surnamed the Wise, departed this life. His death was peaceful and pious, and as he was the early friend, as well as the constant protector of the reformed cause, it was an event which could not fail of producing a strong impression on the minds of Luther and Melancthon. To them was entrusted the management of his funeral, which was conducted in an unostentatious manner, omitting the superstitious practices which the Papists had been accustomed to observe on similar occasions. Luther delivered a short discourse in German, and Melancthon pronounced an oration in the Latin language. From the latter the reader is presented with the following extracts.

"Amidst this public, universal and most acute sorrow, in which the removal of one of the wisest of princes, a loss so calamitous to this state, is deplored, I feel myself scarcely possessed of sufficient presence of mind to attempt by a formal oration to alleviate the affliction of the nobles and the populace, with a voice too so faultering with grief. Though the extraordinary virtues of this prince peculiarly deserve the funeral honors which well constituted nations have always bestowed on their distinguished men; I am deeply conscious that our tears cannot express his superlative merits. Deeply affected as I am with the loss of the state which in a season of public commotion, and amidst the universal darkness of the age required the light of his wisdom, private feelings mingle with the general lamentation. I could not but honor him while living and mourn him when dead, not only for his signal virtues, but for the innumerable favors of which I have been the recipient. Incapacity of mind, however, and excess of grief forbid a minute encomium upon all his merits; let these flowing tears and this tremulous voice suffice to express the sincerest feelings of a grateful heart.

"That this assembled multitude may form a correct idea of how much they are indebted to this prince, I propose slightly to allude to some things worthy of praise, and present as it were a distant view of them; and though I would by no means assume so much as to hope that I shall be able to cure the grief of those who are aware of the magnitude of that calamity which the state has sustained, yet I may at least assuage their sorrow by reminding them of his virtues.

"This nation is greatly indebted to the higher orders for the advancement of sacred literature, and under Providence for the existence of a prince, who as he was formed by nature pacific, humane and merciful, so nothing was more dear to him than the best interests of his people. The Saxon princes are notorious for their noble lineage, but Frederic was still more illustrious for his knowledge of the science of government and for genuine greatness of mind. I am mistaken if any one was so mighty in arms, and yet so anxious to render the employment of power subservient to the establishment of peace. He was just, gentle, firm, careful of the public welfare, diligent in ascertaining the rights of others, and pacifying the contentions of fellow-citizens, patient toward the faults of the people, aiming mildly to restore those who were capable of amelioration, but severe in punishing the wicked and incorrigible.

"The multitude, I am aware, are smitten with an admiration of heroic achievements, and esteem the soldier above the quiet citizen. The virtues of domestic life are overlooked, and they who cultivate peace and the arts acquire but a slender praise. But I confess myself of a far different opinion, for if you consider utility, if you remark the design of man's creation, peace is preferable to war. I cannot prefer the great but warlike Anthony, to the peaceful Augustus, nor admit that Alcibiades was of more service to Greece, than Solan; of whom the former ruined his country by promoting eternal war, the latter not only preserved but constituted it a great state by furnishing it with ample laws. Frederic was formed to excel in the more useful and therefore the superior virtues. It was for him to preserve his people in peace amidst the most turbu-

lent times. Who will venture to compare a victory with the more splendid achievement of securing tranquillity during many years, more than thirty, of commotion, while many envied and many endeavored to excite war. Believe me, the wisdom and the real fortitude of Frederic were of no common cast, co-operating to overcome the impetuosity of anger, to spare the lives of his subjects, and to allay the violence of armed hostility by reason, by counsel and even by purchase. When the friends of Pericles were enumerating his trophies and congratulating him upon his victories, he replied, the praise did not belong to *him* so much as to his *soldiers* or to *fortune*, but he would claim this as his just distinction, *that no citizen through his means ever put on mourning*—intimating that he had never been guilty of any treacherous violence to advance his own dignity; but our illustrious prince not only never revenged private injuries, but he made even war itself yield to reason and become subservient to the preservation of his citizens.

"He possessed the greatest *private* virtues and a peculiar devotedness to the study of the *Christian religion*. He always treated sacred things with the utmost seriousness, and amidst the contrariety of opinions prevalent in the present age, he diligently aimed to discover the best and most indubitable. Before the present period of reform, when human rites were appointed in the churches by pontifical authority, he ever preferred what was most conducive to morals; and, because he felt persuaded that the common people were allured by these means to pay attention to religion, he erected churches, devised ceremonies, and exerted himself to procure teachers of sacred doctrine. Often would he confer with learned men on the nature and power of religion. These I consider proofs of a well disposed mind.

"When Christianity began to rise again, as it were from the dead, and to be purified from her corruptions, he entirely devoted his mind to it, neither approving nor condemning any thing with precipitation. Wherever he saw the evidence of religious truth he embraced it with all his soul, and it became the means of establishing and nourishing his piety. He shunned insignificant disputes which did not conduce to edification; and when he observed certain impious men, upon pretence of enjoying evangelical liberty, debasing themselves and religion by a ferociousness of conduct and a contempt of public decency, he cautiously avoided giving them or others occasion of introducing rash changes through his example, perceiving the dangerous tendency of such innovations.

"I omit the detail of a variety of excellencies for which he was distinguished. I say nothing of his character as a peace maker, or his fidelity in friendship—of his care to avert dangers, or his firmness in sustaining them—of the suavity of his manners, his gentleness, or his remarkable acuteness of intellect, of his management of his financial resources, by which of late they were so much recruited—these things are all known to you, and while you cherish gratitude to God for having bestowed such a prince, ought never to be obliterated from your memories. Our country, alas! has lost not only a useful and gracious prince, and one who has for a long period preserved public peace, but also a father endowed with every various excellence. They merit the highest honor in every place who assiduously cultivate the country; he did indeed cultivate it, devoting the years of peace which he procured, to its improvement, to the education of youth, and to the promotion of commerce. Our academy has lost a Mecænas; no prince possessed more capability, more devoted attachment, or knew better how to promote its interests. All Germany has lost a prince and a counsellor in every important affair; for so great was his wisdom in German affairs, and his general influence, that he was deemed a proper person for the Imperial dignity, and was consulted as an oracle; lost too at a moment when Germany is ripe for civil war; lost, when his authority, discretion, and superiority of mind were peculiarly requisite for the restoration of peace, the regulation of the laws, and the reformation of religion.

"And shall we not mourn thy death, O Frederic? may we not lament our bereavement at so inauspicious a moment, not only of a *ruler*, but of a *father?*—all eyes are turned to thy illustrious brother, and the country feels that in him it may safely repose the utmost confidence; but he is himself most painfully sensible that by thy removal he is deprived of another self, of another mind capacitated to aid amidst surrounding difficulties! This weeping senate too, the director of public affairs, seems almost exanimate with excess of sorrow, engaged as in a dubious strife, and accustomed to follow thy signals and thy well-known voice!

"But away with intemperate grief. Wise men have usually adduced considerations respecting the brevity of human life, and the common destiny of mankind in order to fortify others against the evils incident to our condition; but we shall at present omit such references; for although Frederic derived great consolation and firmness of mind from realizing the general reason and utility of many appointments, yet another greater and more efficacious principle supported his spirit in the hour of dissolution. He knew from the instructions of Christianity that death was a change not only inflicted on the human race by divine appointment as a punishment for sin, in which view it is a melancholy circumstance; but that to all the pious it is a delightful idea that by this means sin is destroyed, and we then commence the journey of immortality.

"For how many years was our prince disturbed and distracted by religous disputes! What forms of sin and of death were perpetually presented to his mind!—so that he came *prepared* to the last great battle. When he resigned this calamitous and wretched life, we rather congratulate him on his departure, who has left so many evidences that he has put on a glorious immortality, and who therefore ought not in fact to be represented as having lost his life. And as he departed with such tranquillity of mind, let us patiently submit to the whole will of God, and aspire after such a death whenever we are called into eternity."

Melancthon used frequently to say of the Elector Frederic, that he had plucked a flower from all the virtues. He wrote the epitaph which was inscribed on his monument.

Ante petet cursu Bojemica rura supino
  Unde in Saxonicos defluit Albis agros;
Inclyta quam possit meritorum fama tuorum
  Occidere in populis, Dux Frederice, tuis.
Aurea viderunt hæ gentes secula, regni
  Dum tibi Saxonici sceptra tenere datum est.
Pace frui placida campique urbesque solebant
  Horrenda extimuit classica nulla nurus
Bella alii ferro, sed tu ratione gerebas
  Et sine vi victi sæpe dedere manus.
Ingenio claros meruisti sæpe triumphos
  Militeque haud ullo fixa tropæa tibi:
Et pacis studiis florere ac artibus urbes
  Contigit auspicio, Dux Frederice, tuo.
Fovisti spretas hac tempestate Camænas
  Unicus et studiis præmia digna dabas
Namque tuo sumptu flavum schola condita ad Albim
  est
Ut vitæ verum traderet illa modum.

Hic Evangelii primum doctrina renata
Deterso cæpit pura nitere situ.
Induit hic veros vultus, iterumque colorem
Accepit tandem religio ipsa suum.
Et cum germani sumpsissent arma tyranni
Contra Evangelium sanctaque jussa Dei;
Doctores tibi cura pios defendere soli,
Et Christi late spargere dogma fuit.
His tibi pro meritis grata præconia voce
Posteritas omnis, virque puerque, canent.
Nulla tuas unquam virtutes nesciet ætas
Non jus in laudes mors habet atra tuas.

Beyond the utmost of Bohemia's bounds,
Where Albis pours along his lazy streâm;
From every tongue our FREDERIC's name resounds,
And all thy people hail the glorious theme.

Whilst thou the sceptre of these regions held,
No rude alarms of war disturb'd our rest;
Another golden age our eyes beheld,
While quietness our fields and cities blest.

Thy rule was reason, and thy trophy peace,
Thou hast deserv'd the triumphs of the field,
But 'twas thy glory to bid discord cease,
And though *victorious*, the first to *yield*

Learning and Science by thy fostering care
Adorn'd our cities, and proclaim'd thee WISE;
But not to thee were Muses only dear,
Restor'd Religion now delights our eyes.

Again we see her own celestial hue,
Stripp'd of the meretricious modes of art;
And when to arms against her, tyrants flew,
Thine was the care to shield the poison'd dart.

The truth of Christ, the doctrines brought from heaven,
By thee were well discern'd and spread around;
To thee by present times applause is given,
And future ages shall thy name resound.

Yes—distant times thy virtues shall proclaim,
Nor death extinguish thy immortal fame!

In the midst of these public calamities, Saxony recently afflicted with the loss of Frederic, and Germany bleeding from the deep wounds of a civil war, occasioned by the rebellious conduct of the peasants, Luther, quite unexpectedly to most of his friends, married Catharine de Bora. Long in relinquishing his prejudices against the marriage of monks, he had once written thus to Melancthon; "It should seem that because I supplied you with a wife, you wish to be revenged upon me; but depend upon it I will take effectual care not to be caught in your snares"—but affection charmed away his resolution. The *time* of this union was considered by some of his best friends as rather ill-chosen, amongst whom was Melancthon, who thought it would give occasion, as it assuredly did, to the numerous adversaries of Luther to make uncandid animadversions. These occasioned him some temporary depression of spirits; but a consciousness of acting right, and an ardent attachment to his new companion, notwithstanding the dissatisfaction of some intimate friends with the *time*, dissipated his gloom. Melancthon addressed an apologetic letter to Camerarius on the subject. It was written in Greek, and is as follows: "As some unfounded reports will probably reach you respecting the marriage of Luther, I think it proper to write to you the true state of the case, and to give my own opinion. On the thirteenth of June, Luther, to our great surprise, and without saying a word to his friends, married Catharine de Bora, and only invited Pomeranus, Lucca the painter, and Apellus the lawyer, to supper in the evening, celebrating the espousals in the customary manner. Some, perhaps, may be astonished that he should have married at this unfavorable juncture of public affairs, so deeply afflictive to every good man, and thus appear to be unaffected and careless about the distressing events which have occurred amongst us; even though his own reputation suffers at a moment when Germany most requires his talents and influence. This, however, is my view of the subject. Luther is a man who has nothing of the unsocial misanthropist about him; but you know his habits, and I need say no more on this head. Surely it is no wonderful and unaccountable thing that his great and benevolent soul should be influenced by the gentle affections, especially as there is nothing reprehensible or criminal in it. The falsehood and calumny of the general report of his having been guilty of some misconduct is evident. He is, in fact, by nature, fitted for the married state, and it is pronounced honorable in the sacred Scriptures. The allegation that it was unseasonable and unadvised, which our adversaries are so fond of producing, is not to be regarded, much less the derisions and reproaches of the vicious and profligate. I saw that his change of situation produced some degree of perturbation and gloom of mind, and I have done my utmost to cheer him: for I cannot condemn him as having committed a fault, or fallen into sin, though I grant God has recorded many sins which some of his ancient saints committed, in order that we might be stimulated to repose our confidence, not in men, however dignified and distinguished, but in his word alone. It would be impious to condemn a doctrine because of the errors of its professors, but in the present instance I verily believe our friend has done nothing which is not fully defensible, or for which he ought to be accused. I have in possession the most decisive evidences of his piety and love to God, so that the malicious reproaches heaped upon Luther, are nothing else than the inventions of scurrilous sycophants, who want employment for a slanderous tongue. In my opinion, however, this discouraging misrepresentation may be of some use, because it is dangerous, not only to persons who sustain ecclesiastical functions, but to every class of men, to enjoy too high a reputation. For, as a certain orator remarks, wise men as well as fools may be betrayed into an undue self-estimation and vanity of mind, through being gifted with some happy art or talent. But as the proverb says, 'another kind of life, another kind of living.'

"I have said so much on this subject lest this unexpected occurrence should have occasioned you an unnecessary degree of uneasiness, for I know you are concerned for the reputation of our friend Luther."

It would be scarcely worth while in this place to introduce to notice the controversy between Erasmus and Luther, were it not for the illustration it affords of the character of Melancthon, who both on account of his connection with the parties, and his general celebrity, was almost necessarily implicated in any public transaction that affected the reformed cause. No reflecting person will be surprised that they should become avowed antagonists. The character of each must naturally be disagreeable to the other. Erasmus could not approve the undaunted and untractable heroism of Luther, nor could Luther endure the trimming artifice and sycophancy of Erasmus.

The immediate occasion of this controversy was an essay on the freedom of the human will, which Erasmus ventured to publish in the autumn of 1524,

and for which as he expresses it, he "expected to be pelted." Upwards of a year elapsed before Luther produced his reply in a treatise, de Servo Arbitrio, "on the Bondage of the Will." His antagonist re-appeared in the field of strife, in a book in two parts, entitled Hyperaspistes. "Did you ever read," says Melancthon, "a more bitter publication than this of Erasmus? He calls it Hyperaspistes, but it is absolutely *aspis*, that is, a wasp."

During this contention, Erasmus wrote some long and artful letters to Melancthon. He assures him that he felt impelled by the peculiarity of his circumstances and situation to write against Luther—that if Wittemberg had not been so distant, he should gladly have sought an interview, and should have been happy in a visit from Melancthon—that he had read his "Loci Communes," and admired more than ever his candid and happy genius—that he had given the most moderate counsel to popes and princes, but that the Reformers used him very ill in giving him the nick-name of Balaam, who was hired to curse Israel—that Cardinal Campeggio had sent one of his agents to discuss with him the propriety of removing Melancthon from his present situation. "My answer," says he, "was that I sincerely wished such a genius as yours to be perfectly free from all these contentions, but that I despaired of your recantation. *I open this secret to you in the entire confidence that you will be candid enough not to divulge it among the wicked ones!*" In a subsequent letter written with much irritation of mind, obviously because Melancthon was not to be taken in the snare he had laid for his religious integrity, he professes that he did not bestow much pains to persuade him to forsake the Reformers as he foresaw it would be useless, but he wished he had devoted his genius solely to literature, for there were plenty of actors in the religious tragedy!

Who does not perceive the insinuating purpose of Erasmus? Vexed at heart that the Lutheran cause should be strengthened by the literary authority, unquestionable moderation and superior talents of Melancthon, he employed every means to separate him from it. Yet with his characteristic duplicity, he disclaims the real motives which all his letters betray. Let us hear the noble language of Melancthon. "For my part, I cannot with a safe conscience condemn the sentiments of Luther, however I may be charged with folly or superstition—*that* does not weigh with me. But I would *oppose them strenuously if* THE SCRIPTURES *were on the other side;* most certainly *I shall never change my sentiments from a regard to* HUMAN AUTHORITY, *or from the* DREAD OF DISGRACE." These are the words of the *wavering* and the *timid* Melancthon!

In the autumn of the year 1525, by the Elector's permission, and at the express solicitation of the senate of Nuremberg, he repaired thither to assist in forming a plan for the establishment of a public seminary. When he first received the application, he writes thus to his particular friend the senior Senator. "It afforded me great pleasure to hear from you, that your citizens were so anxiously disposed to erect a public literary institution; for nothing can be a nobler ornament, or a surer defence to a city than such an establishment properly formed. And I consider you, my friend, as meriting no small praise, for stimulating your fellow citizens to the maintenance and cultivation of letters. I promise you most readily all the assistance in my power, although I am not so ignorant of myself as not to perceive that I am incapable of fulfilling your wishes and your too partial opinion of me." This journey, in which he was accompanied by Camerarius, was of a preparatory nature; in the ensuing year he visited Nuremberg, for the purpose of establishing the academical institution, and of giving his advice in the management of ecclesiastical affairs. So indefatigable was Melancthon in his attention to the interests of religion and literature! He was appointed to deliver an oration at the public opening of this academy, which is preserved in the volumes, containing his select declamations.

The following passages are extracted from it:—

"Consider the manners and general course of life for which those nations are distinguished, which are totally unacquainted with letters, as the Scythians. Having no cities under the regulation of wholesome laws and no courts of justice, those who prevail by force or faction dictate the law; commercial intercourse with neighboring states is precluded; there can be no interchange of property; public robbery is the only means of escaping from the miseries of famine; every supply must depend upon the flesh or fowl accidentally procured, and not only is there no discipline at home, but even those domestic affections which are implanted in the human bosom, conjugal fidelity, parental tenderness, the attachments of consanguinity and friendship, become utterly extinguished by excessive barbarism. The science of education, the foundation of future excellence is unknown, virtue is disregarded, no sense of propriety prevails none of the assiduities of friendship, none of the charities of life; nor, finally, the least correctness of sentiment respecting the will of God to man and religion in general. Such is the cyclopic nature of savage life, only with somewhat different shades and degrees of barbarism; and to this state these nations must always tend unless by imparting knowledge to them, they become excited and formed to virtue, humanity and piety. You therefore have acted wisely and nobly by introducing learning into your city and studying to give it a permanent establishment, from a conviction that it will be your best defence. In this tempestuous age, your zeal merits peculiar applause, because amidst the general storm that agitates the empire, literature seems in danger of being wrecked."

After this he proceeds to complain bitterly of the priesthood for their negligence of learning, and declares that their fraternity have shown themselves the greatest enemies of the liberal arts, so that the institution at Nuremberg is peculiarly well-timed. "And," says he, "do not be loth to add this to the other ornaments of your city which is already so distinguished for its wealth, its edifices, and the ingenuity of its artificers, as to bear a comparison with the most celebrated cities of antiquity. There is not a place in Germany more remarkable for well informed citizens, who having added the establishment of the liberal sciences to their excellent civil polity, will be long regarded as pre-eminent in rank above all the cities of the empire; for it is impossible to express what an accession of honor to that already acquired, will result from the erection of this institution of useful learning.

"If you proceed to cultivate these studies, you will not only be illustrious in your own country, but renowned abroad. You will be regarded as the authors of your country's best defence, for no walls or bulwarks can prove more durable memorials of cities than the learning, wisdom, and virtues of its citizens. A Spartan said, that their walls ought to be constructed of iron and not of stone, but I am of opinion that wisdom, moderation and piety, form a better protection than arms or walls."

The orator then endeavors to inspirit and excite the citizens of Nuremberg to a noble emulation of Florence, which had been so distinguished for the encouragement of the exiled literati and the cultivation of Greek and Roman lore: at a time, too, when the Roman Pontiff refused the great Theo-

dore Gaza, the least remuneration for his laborious services. He traces the revival of letters in Europe to the example of Florence, representing it as "the harbor into which shipwrecked literature was received and secured."

"It is not only a sin against heaven, but betrays a brutal mind, whenever any one refuses to exert himself for the proper instruction of his children. One great distinction between the human race and the brute creation is this, that nature teaches the animal to desist from all further care of its offspring as soon as it grows up, but enjoins it upon man not only to nourish his children during the first and infantine period of life, but as they rise into maturer age to cultivate their moral powers with increased assiduity and diligence.

"In the proper constitution of a state, therefore, schools of learning are primarily requisite, where the rising generation, which is the foundation of a future empire, should be instructed, for it is a most fallacious idea to suppose that solid excellence is likely to be required without due regard to instruction; nor can persons be suitably qualified to govern the state without the knowledge of those principles of right government which learning only can bestow.

"Having devoted yourselves then to this object, do not be thwarted by the efforts of malice nor by any other difficulties thrown in the way to prevent the studies of your citizens. Respecting your professors, this we may venture to promise, that they are equal to the task they have undertaken, and you may rely on the diligent discharge of their important office.

"May the Lord Jesus Christ bestow his blessing upon these transactions, and abundantly prosper your counsels and the studies of your youth!"

It appears from a long letter addressed to the principal senator of Nuremberg already mentioned, and with whom he maintained an uninterrupted correspondence of nearly thirty-seven years, that he was invited to occupy a professorship in the new institution, but he declined it in the most modest yet firm manner, assuring his friend, that he felt the imperious nature of his obligations to his prince, and would rather perish with hunger than abandon the duties of his station at Wittemberg.

During these almost innumerable public and private engagements which Melancthon represents as both oppressive to his mind and injurious to his health, he composed and published, from time to time, a variety of useful pieces; amongst which were several introductions to different books of Scripture, a Latin version of the proverbs of Solomon, and an epitome of the doctrines believed and taught in the reformed churches.

CHAPTER VII.

John succeeds his brother Frederic in the Electorate—Changes—Diet of Spires—Melancthon's Memorial—The Landgrave of Hesse promotes the Reformation in his dominions—Melancthon's "Libellus Visitatorius"—Commissioners appointed to inspect the Reformed Churches—Second Diet of Spires—Anecdote of the Landgrave of Hesse—Remarkable story of Grynœus—Melancthon's visit to his mother—Continuance of the sacramental controversy—Conference at Marpurg—Melancthon's Commentary on the Epistle to the Colossians. 1526 to 1529.

No circumstance could be more favorable to the Reformation in Saxony, than the succession of John, brother of the deceased Frederic, to the Electoral dominions. Had he been influenced by the sentiments of the infatuated papist, Duke George, unhappy consequences might have been apprehended; for though we feel assured it was the cause of truth and righteousness, and possessed as such a principle of imperishable vitality, had these princes "taken counsel together against the Lord," it would doubtless have checked its growing prosperity and deferred its final triumphs. The wisdom of a superintending Providence was most apparent in all these transactions. The policy and prudence of Frederic resulting from conscientious scruples blended with some apprehensions of the overawing domination of Rome, was admirably adapted to parry the repeated thrusts of ecclesiastical tyranny, and to furnish opportunity for the Reformers to disseminate their principles; but when these had taken root, it required a more decided protection and a firmer authority to favor the maturing harvest. John was of a bolder cast of mind than his deceased brother, and avoided his temporizing caution, though it ought to be recorded to the honor of the latter, that a little previous to his death he had intended to give a more determined support to the reformed religion. The new Elector was warmly seconded by his son John Frederic. Philip, the Landgrave of Hesse, also, might now be esteemed his zealous friend and coadjutor, for at a conference between the three princes at Creutzberg, he had most fully avowed the similarity of his views and determinations.

The Elector soon introduced important changes into the university and collegiate church of Wittemberg. A new order of worship was provided, the sacrament was administered in the German instead of the Latin language, and Luther transmitted to him the new ecclesiastical rites practised by the Reformers, and drawn up with the advice of Melancthon and Pomeranus. A general visitation of the Saxon churches was also promised.

In the mean time Charles V. in letters to his brother Ferdinand, had commanded a diet to be held at Augsburg, which though he wrote from Toledo in May, 1525, was not assembled till the following November, and was then so thinly attended as to be prorogued to the 3d May, 1526, when the place was directed to be exchanged for Spires. The Elector availed himself of this opportunity to form an association between the chief cities and princes of the empire who were moderately disposed, for the purpose of representing to Ferdinand the danger of attempting to execute the decree of Worms. At length Ferdinand confessed the necessity of adopting pacific measures, and allowed the princes to send such divines to the diet as they judged most capable of giving advice. The Elector of Saxony directed a brief memorial to be prepared, containing a reply to the principal objections of the papists. It was written in German by Melancthon. The following is a specimen:—

"The first question to be considered is, whether in preaching certain doctrines and omitting certain usages in opposition to the authority of the bishops and prelates we are guilty of schism; for though they cannot deny our doctrine they seek a pretext to condemn us from the alleged defect of authority from the ecclesiastics. They argue, 1. That the bishops possess authority in the church, and no one else. 2. The masses, monastic vows and other practices have prevailed for so many ages—but the church is infallible, therefore they cannot be abrogated. 3. To obey is better than sacrifice, we ought therefore to be obsequious. 4. Charity requires the toleration of human infirmity. 5. Civil commotion, to which disobedience to superiors would expose us, ought by every means to be avoided."

"To this it is replied:

"The ministers of the gospel are bound by the precept of Jesus Christ, in Matthew x. 32, to preach the primary article of the Christian system, *justification by faith in Christ*, and on no pretence to omit or conceal it. This doctrine has been greatly misapprehended, and to the disparagement of Christ, mankind have placed an unwarrantable dependence on masses, invocation of saints, and

other works of their own: and these things, though they are manifest blasphemies, it is notorious, have been taught in the Romish church, and substituted for the merits of Christ. The pope and the bishops neglect their duties, usurp authority over emperors and princes, and misapply the revenues of the church to tyrannical purposes; all this in the sacred name of Christ himself. Surely these are positive violations of the second commandment, and require the interference of our assemblies to rectify and remove.

"On these grounds it is incumbent on the pastors of churches, from the very nature of their calling, to preach the truth, especially when the bishops allowing their authority, neglect to do it. In vain do our ministers both by their voice and their pen remonstrate; the only consequence is, they subject themselves to persecution—but when placed in circumstances similar to Christ and his apostles before Anna and Caiphas, they can adopt the declaration of the primitive disciples, 'We ought to obey God rather than men.'

"We deny that the pope and the clergy constitute the true church, though it is granted there exist some among them who are real members of that church, and who renounce the prevailing errors; for the true church consists of those and those only who have the word of God and are 'sanctified and cleansed.'—Eph. v. 26. The Holy Spirit expressly warns us against mistaking the pope and his clergy for the CHURCH, for he has predicted by Paul that Antichrist would come as God sitting in the temple of God; that is, in the church. We are not departing from the church, therefore, in contending against the errors of Antichrist, which they themselves who adhere to the papal establishment acknowledge. Nor is it to the purpose to contend about the alteration in external ordinances, for the unity of the church does not consist in these things, and whoever affirms it does, ought to be opposed.

"With respect to disobedience and the late insurrections, our conduct has not occasioned them, but THE POPE AND THE BISHOPS THEMSELVES ARE THE CAUSE by their persecutions and excommunications, and by demanding AN OBEDIENCE WHICH AMOUNTS TO NOTHING SHORT OF A RENUNCIATION OF THE WORD OF GOD.

"The pretence of charity to the weak and erring is altogether inapplicable, for our papistical adversaries who refuse all instruction and act only as persecutors and tyrants, are not to be classed amongst the persons of that description to whom Paul refers."

He confirms his statements by an appeal at large to the precepts of Christ and to examples in the history of the Jewish and Christian churches, and concludes by affirming that the doctrine of justification by faith without works ought to be maintained, though it expose us to persecution and every species of distress.

"The second question," says Melancthon, "is this, whether the princes have done right in authorizing the reformation of abuses in their colleges and monasteries?" The reply is, "it has been shown already that the princes have done right in receiving the doctrines of the gospel, it follows, therefore, that it is no less right to remove abuses which corrupt it. The question is whether the reformed doctrines are true or not; if true, the princes ought to protect them who are no more under an obligation to obey the persecution edicts of emperors and rulers than Jonathan was to kill David, or Obadiah to kill the prophets. Nor ought they to be stigmatized with the name of *schismatics*, because they do not separate from the church of Rome out of mere hostility and petulence of disposition, but because they are compelled to it by the express command of Scripture."

The diet of Spires assembled in June. Several of the Lutheran divines were heard in explanation of their doctrines, and the deputies presented their memorial on the abolition of abuses. The result was favorable to the Reformation, a decree being obtained after much debate recognizing the necessity of a general council, appealing to the emperor for that purpose, and claiming on behalf of the German princes in the mean time the liberty of acting independently in religion till such an appointment.

The Landgrave of Hesse, upon his return from the diet, devoted himself with his characteristic ardor to the great and good work of promoting the reformation in his own dominions. He wrote letters to Melancthon soliciting his advice; who in reply urged the Landgrave to proceed in a gradual and cautious manner, conniving for a time at certain non-essentials, the sudden abolition of which might be prejudicial to the cause he was desirous of promoting. He laments the contentions which subsisted amongst the reformers themselves, frequently about trifles, which should by every means be avoided. The preachers of the gospel ought, he said, to inculcate not only the doctrines of faith, but the practices of piety, the fear of God, love to man, and obedience to magistrates. He besought his highness to abstain from every attempt to extend the reformation by military force; for the late occurrences of the rustic war would evince that they who delight in war should certainly be scattered.* "The Romish ecclesiastics instigate to war, why do not the rest exhort men to gain a knowledge of the subject, and to preserve peace? Your highness, I am convinced might do a great deal with the princes, if you would exhort them to take pains to understand the points in dispute, and endeavor to terminate these contentions."

During the two years of peace to the reformed churches which succeeded the diet of Spires, the Elector of Saxony employed himself in the very important work of regulating ecclesiastical affairs. Preparatory to a general visitation by persons suitably authorized and accomplished for the undertaking, Melancthon composed a directory for the use of the churches, which was published under the immediate sanction of the Elector. It is divided into eighteen sections, comprehending the doctrine of forgiveness and justification by faith in Christ—the law—prayer—the endurance of tribulation—baptism—the Lord's supper—repentance—confession—the atonement—public worship—marriage—freedom of the will—Christian liberty—the Turkish war—the mode of preaching—excommunication—the office of superintendents or bishops—public schools of literature. The arrangement of these divisions might perhaps be criticised, but the whole appears to have been written with the author's characteristic skill and perspicuity. A preface, at the Elector's request, was prefixed by Luther.

This publication, called *Libellus Visitatorius*, involved some unpleasant consequences to Melancthon. The papists professed to discover in it a defection from many of the sentiments of Luther, and

* The impetuosity of this enterprising prince could scarcely be restrained within proper limits. He was for the use of arms, but was checked by Melancthon, and by the Elector John, who acted with the advice of Luther. The latter declared, "If the Landgrave were determined to have recourse to arms, it would be better for the Elector to dissolve alliance with him; but if force were to be first used by their adversaries, they then had a right to repel it."

hailed the imaginary difference with a prodigious but premature exultation. It cannot be doubted that such a circumstance was eagerly desired, and it must be confessed would have been worthy their mutual congratulations. Luther despised the charge. "Let our adversaries," says he, "glory in their lies, as they always do, for they take no pleasure in truth. Their glorying is a miserable one, and will be of no long continuance; but let them solace themselves with their vain hopes and joys, as they often do, and let them swell and bluster, I am very well pleased." At the same time Melancthon discloses a secret in a letter to his confidential friend Camerarius. "I am applied to from Bohemia to desert the reformed cause, and promised any remuneration from king Ferdinand. Indeed my defection is publicly reported as a fact, because in the little book written for the reformed churches I have shown an increased degree of moderation, and yet you perceive I have really inserted nothing different from what Luther constantly maintains. But because I have employed no asperity of language, these very acute men judge that I necessarily differ from Luther." Cochlæus does not scruple to charge Melancthon with a *crafty moderation*, and Luther with a *change of sentiment;* but as Seckendorf observes, "Nothing better than such malignant insinuations was to be expected from him."

But the tauntings and misrepresentations of avowed adversaries were far less vexatious than the conduct of a friend and fellow-laborer. In the first article of the Libellus Visitatorius, the pastors of churches were admonished to instruct the people in the nature of true repentance, and to be careful not to separate repentance from the doctrine of faith, the former of which was stated to originate in the fear of divine judgments, and a just impression of the terrors of the law; lest the vulgar should imagine that the remission of sins was attainable without the exercise of a penitent and contrite spirit. They were to press the consciences of men on this subject, and urge to repentance, to prevent their placing dependance on any personal merit, for salvation. John Agricola, chaplain to Count Mansfield, and his attendant at the diet of Spires, loudly exclaimed against this advice, affirming that it was improper to make these statements and appeals to the common people, and that instead of attempting to work upon their fears, and terrify their consciences, they should be exhorted to faith in God as the commencement and essence of real religion. Instead of candidly representing his objections to Melancthon himself, he vociferated his complaints to the papists, and it seems highly probable, from his whole conduct, that his intentions were to purchase a great name by obtruding himself forward as the head of a new party. In this he succeeded, for he became founder of the sect of the Antinomians, and afterwards a preacher at the court of Berlin.

Melancthon fully expresses his sentiments on the subject in his letters, one of which addressed to Justus Jonas deserves to be noticed. He begins by expressing his wish that Agricola had shown a more friendly spirit, and that instead of circulating his censures throughout Germany, even in Leipsic, and in the very court of Duke George, he had first informed him privately of any thing which he conceived objectionable in his writing. He then alludes to certain transactions relative to this document and the visitation, in the presence of the Elector, Luther, Pomeranus, and others. Agricola referred to Luther as having stated that repentance originated in the love of righteousness; quoted *the story of the heathen mariners in* Jonah, and said that Christ commanded repentance to be preached in his name, and not in the name of Moses. To this Melancthon replies, that terrors of conscience must exist previous to justification, and these terrors seem to originate more in the fear of punishment than the love of righteousness. Agricola answers, that contrition arises from faith in the divine threatenings—but what, says Melancthon, is faith in the divine threatenings but the fear of them? Nothing, he says, offends his opponent more, than that in the second article it is ordered that the ten commandments be taught; because we are free from the law, and ought to study rather the writings of Paul; to which it is answered, that Paul enforces the law, and Christ himself taught it and explained its obligatory nature. Agricola, laughably enough, objects that Christ only spoke to the Jews. This war of words was sufficiently disagreeable to the amiable Melancthon, and he informs Jonas, that he had thrice solicited Agricola to bury what had passed in oblivion, and to renew their former friendship; but that he treated his overture with contemptuous silence. This disagreement, however, assumed so serious an aspect in the opinion of the Elector, that he immediately interposed; and summoning Melancthon, Agricola, and Luther to Torgau, stopped the further progress of the dispute for the present, by an amicable adjustment.

The commissioners appointed for the great purpose of inspecting the state of the reformed churches, were twenty-eight in number, consisting of laymen and ecclesiastics. They were distributed into parties according to the different provinces. Melancthon, with five others, namely, John a Planitz, a knight, Jerome Schurff, Erasmus, (not of Rotterdam) Frederic Myconius, and Justus Menius, a clergyman of Eisenach, inspected Thuringia; Luther, Justus Jonas, Pomeranus, Spalatine, and other persons of eminence, were appointed in the general commission. All of them diligently labored to fix suitable pastors in the respective parishes, to abolish ancient superstitions, to regulate the public seminaries; in a word to promote general good order and religious improvement.

The second diet of Spires was convened in the year 1529. A pleasant anecdote is related of the Landgrave of Hesse on this occasion. Faber, bishop of Vienna, intending to ridicule the reformers, seeing the letters V. D. M. I. Æ. upon the sleeves of some of the courtiers of the Landgrave, chose to interpret them "Verbum Dei Manet Im Ermel; The word of God remains in the sleeves." To which the Landgrave immediately replied, "No, this is not the meaning, but Verbum Diaboli Manet in Episcopis; The word of the devil remains in the bishops." The real signification of the letters however was, Verbum Dei Manet In Æternam; The word of God remains for ever.

A curious circumstance occurred at this convocation, which Melancthon relates in his commentary on the angelic appearance mentioned in the tenth chapter of Daniel, and which he affirms was but one out of many of a similar nature, which he could fully authenticate. Simon Grynæus, a very intimate friend of his, and at this period Greek professor in the University of Heidelberg, who combined profound erudition with zealous piety, came over unexpectedly to see him at Spires. He ventured to encounter Faber, and to urge him closely on some of the topics in discussion between the Catholics and the Reformers. The bishop, who was plausible, but shallow, fearful of engaging in argument, but cruelly ready to use the sword, pretended that private business with the king required his attention at that moment, but that he felt extremely desirous of the friendship of Grynæus, and of another opportunity of discussing the controverted points. No dissembler himself, Grynæus returned to his friends without the least suspicion of the

wily courtier's intentions; nor could any of them have known it, but for what Melancthon deemed a supernatural interference. They were just sitting down to supper, and Grynæus had related part of the conversation between himself and the bishop, when Melancthon was suddenly called out of the room to an old man whom he had never seen or heard of, or could afterwards discover, characterized by a most observable peculiarity of manner and dress, and who said, that persons by the king's authority would soon arrive to seize Grynæus, and put him in prison, Faber having influenced him to this persecuting measure. He enjoined that instant means should be adopted to secure the departure of Grynæus to a place of safety, and urged that there should not be a moment's delay. Upon communicating this information he immediately withdrew. Melancthon and his friends instantly bestirred themselves, and saw him safe across the Rhine. It afterwards appeared that the king's messengers were in the house almost as soon as they had left it, but Grynæus was out of the reach of danger; a danger, as Melancthon remarks, easily imagined by those who were acquainted with Faber's cruelty. He says they were all of opinion that this was a divine interposition, so singular was the appearance of the old man, and so rapid the movements of the instrument of vengeance, from whose power Grynæus scarcely escaped.

Such is the narrative which the reader is put in possession of without note or comment. Some will think it supernatural, others will exclaim, *Credat Judæus Apella*, and many, perhaps, will consider it, though remarkable, capable of explanation without allowing it to have been miraculous. The use Melancthon makes of the statement, must be admitted to be worthy of his exalted piety; "Let us," says he, "be grateful to God who sends his angels to be our protectors, and let us with increased tranquillity of mind, fulfil the duties assigned us."

At this Diet the former decree, which allowed every prince to manage his own ecclesiastical affairs as he thought proper till the appointment of a general council, was revoked; all farther innovation in religion, was interdicted, the celebration of mass was nowhere to be disallowed, and the anabaptists were made subject to capital punishment. The resolutions of the first Diet had been carried *unanimously*, they were revoked, merely by a *majority* of Catholic votes, procured by imperial influence. The arguments and remonstrances of the Reformers were useless, and the only measure left them to adopt was to enter a solemn *protest* against this decree, which they did on the nineteenth of April; whence they acquired the name of PROTESTANTS. The first who thus obtained this glorious distinction were John, Elector of Saxony, George, Elector of Brandenburg, Ernest and Francis, Dukes of Lunenburg, Philip, Landgrave of Hesse, and Wolfgang, Prince of Anhalt. They were seconded by thirteen or fourteen imperial cities.

The ambassadors commissioned by these noble dissenters to communicate their proceedings to the Emperor in Spain, were immediately arrested upon their arrival. This unwarrantable violence only tended to strengthen their union, and they held various meetings at Roth, Nuremberg and Smalcald, to concert measures for mutual defence. The Elector of Saxony, however, instructed by Luther and Melancthon, showed a disinclination to form a military association, and nothing decisive resulted at present from these deliberations.

The anxiety of Melancthon, who had accompanied the Elector to the Diet, was extreme. During all these transactions, he and Luther, with whom a perpetual communication was maintained, were constantly consulted. In every struggle and difficulty they largely participated, for on them it depended in a great measure to pilot the new-launched vessel through the tempestuous seas. Melancthon was sometimes entreated by his friends who witnessed his extreme agitation, to suppress these anxieties and dismiss trouble from his mind. To which he would piously reply, "if I had no anxieties I should lose a powerful incentive to prayer; but when the cares of life impel to devotion, the best means of consolation, a religious mind cannot do without them. Thus trouble compels me to pray, and prayer drives away trouble."

Availing himself of a favorable opportunity, he went from Spires to pay a short visit to his mother. In the course of conversation she mentioned to her son the manner in which she was accustomed to attend to her devotions, and the form she generally used, which was free from the prevailing superstitions. "But what," said she, "am I to believe amidst so many different opinions of the present day?"—"Go on," replied Melancthon, "believe and pray as you now do and have done before—and do not disturb yourself about the disputes and controversies of the times."

The sacramental controversy between the divines of Saxony and Switzerland, continued to rage with unabated violence, neither party being disposed to retract in the smallest degree. Oecolampadius strongly solicited Melancthon to declare in favor of Zuinglius and the Sacramentarians, to which he ingenuously replied, "that after due examination he could not approve of their opinion, not finding sufficient reason in the literal sense of the words—that if he were to act in a politic manner he should speak otherwise, knowing there were many learned men among the Sacramentarians, whose friendship would be advantageous to him, so that if he could have concurred in their opinion about the Lord's Supper, he would have spoken freely. The Zuinglians supposed, he said, the body of Christ to be absent and only *represented* in the Sacrament, as persons are represented in a theatre, but he considered that Jesus Christ had promised to be with us even to the end of the world—that it is not necessary to separate the divinity from the humanity—he was persuaded, therefore, the sacrament was a pledge of the real presence, and that the body of Christ was truly received in the Lord's Supper—that the proper import of the words 'this is my body,' was not contrary to any article of faith, but agreed with other passages in Scripture where the presence of Christ was mentioned—and that it was unbecoming a Christian to believe that Jesus Christ is as it were imprisoned in heaven—that Oecolampadius had only alluded to some absurdities, and the opinion of some of the fathers against it, neither of which ought to influence those who know that the mysteries of religion are to be judged by the word of God and not by mathematical principles, and that the writings of the ancients abound in contradictions; but, he said the greatest number of the expressions in the most eminent writers, proves the doctrine of the real presence to be the general sense of the church. He desires Oecolampadius to consider the importance of the question in dispute, and the ill consequences of maintaining his opinion with so much warmth of temper, and adds, it would be very proper for some good men to confer together on the subject." To the latter proposition Oecolampadius in his reply most cordially assents.

Some years previous to this period, Melancthon had thus expressed himself in a letter to Camerarius; "I commit the affair to Christ, that his divine wisdom may best consult his own glory. I have hitherto always entertained the hope that he would by some means make it plain what is the true doc-

trine of the sacrament." It is deplorable that such men as Luther and Melancthon should have wandered so long in darkness; yet be it remembered, that though they erred, it was from a most anxious solicitude of mind to adhere rigidly to scriptural statements. They urged the *very words of Christ* as their authority, but unhappily misinterpreted them.

The excellent landgrave of Hesse, with a view to the adjustment of the differences which had so long subsisted amongst the principal reformers respecting the sacrament, procured a friendly conference at Marpurg, a city in his dominions. It took place in October. The leaders on both sides first held a private conference, Luther with Oecolampadius, and Melancthon with Zuinglius. The prince, his courtiers, and chief counsellors, were present at the public disputation, which was conducted on the one side by Zuinglius, Oecolampadius, Bucer, Hedio, Jacob Sturm, a senator of Strasburg, Ulrich Funch, a senator of Zurich, and Rudolphus Frey, of Bazil; on the other by Luther, Melancthon, Eberhard, Thane of Eisenach, Justus Jonas, Casper Cruciger, and others. Jonas describes Zuinglius as rude and forward, Oecolampadius as remarkably mild, Hedio no less liberal and good, and Bucer keen and cunning as a fox.

It appears that the Swiss and Saxon reformers discussed a variety of other topics, in which they either did or supposed themselves to differ, and though both parties afterwards claimed the victory, there is every reason to rely on the statement of Melancthon. "Zuinglius," he says, "readily gave up several things which he had advanced in his writings, particularly his notion of original sin, and came over to the Wittemberg divines in all points, the single article of the Lord's Supper excepted."

No doubt can be entertained that each of the Protestant parties retired from this conference with too much self-satisfaction, and the Papists ridiculed the landgrave for his pious zeal. If, however, the great purpose of perfect agreement were not obtained, it is much to their honor that all parties signed the following statement in reference to the excepted article in Melancthon's report. "We all agree in believing that the Lord's Supper is to be administered in both kinds conformably to its original institution, but that the mass ought not to be practised to procure mercy for the quick or the dead—that the sacrament is truly a sacrament of the body and blood of Jesus Christ, and that to eat of his body and blood in a spiritual sense is absolutely necessary for every Christian. We agree also respecting the utility of the sacrament, that like his holy word it is administered and appointed by God to promote the faith and joy of his feeble and dependant people through the agency of the Holy Spirit. But though we are not yet agreed whether the body and blood of Christ be corporeally present in the bread and wine, yet as far as conscience permits, each party shall manifest a Christian affection to the other, and both shall earnestly implore Almighty God that he would by his Spirit lead and establish us in whatever is the truth!"

In the present year, Luther wrote a preface to the second edition of Melancthon's Commentary on the Epistle to the Colossians. He speaks of it as a book small in size, but great in point of matter and useful tendency, and affirms with extraordinary frankness that he preferred the writings of Melancthon to his own, and was much more desirous that they should be published and read. "I," says he, "am born to be for ever fighting with opponents and with the devil himself, which gives a controversial and warlike cast to all my works. I clear the ground of stumps and trees, root up thorns and briars, fill up ditches, raise causeways, and smooth the roads through the wood: but to Philip Melancthon it belongs, by the grace of God, to perform a milder and more grateful labor—to build, to plant, to sow, to water, to please by elegance and taste. O happy circumstance, and shame to their ingratitude who are not sensible of it! Had such a publication as this appeared twenty years ago, what an invaluable treasure would it have been esteemed! But now, we resemble the Israelites who loathed the manna and sighed for the garlic and the onions of Egypt. A time will come when the loss of such advantages will be deplored in vain."

So strong and so inviolable was the mutual friendship of these noble-minded Reformers. No root of bitterness grew in either bosom—no jealousy or envy divided them. Their only ambition seemed to be to promote each other's reputation, and to strengthen the common cause by zealous co-operation.

CHAPTER VIII.

Brief notice of General Affairs—Appointment of the Diet of Augsburg—Translation of the Augsburg Confession—Popish Confutation—Subsequent proceedings—Melancthon's Apology—Decree of the Diet—Deliberation of the Reformers—Striking anecdote of Melancthon—Anecdote of the Archbishop of Mentz. 1530.

Scrupulously avoiding the minute and intricate transactions of general history, excepting so far as they may be requisite to connect the parts of this narrative together, it will not be expected that the progress of the Turkish war, or the contentions of the Emperor, the Pope, and the King of France, should be detailed. Suffice it simply to allude to these circumstances, that the wonderful movements of providence at this period, may be duly remarked. The Pope and the Emperor were both sufficiently disposed to exert their respective authority as the heads of civil and ecclesiastical affairs, to extinguish the still increasing light of the Reformation. They were anxious to enforce the intolerant edict of Worms, and to concert measures for the more effectual annihilation by force of the Lutheran heresy. But at the very time when it is probable their efforts would have been most alarming, and when urged by the papal party to exert their formidable power, they were prevented from executing their purpose by personal contentions, as well as by the hostility of a foreign enemy.

During some years, France, Spain and Italy had been in a state of commotion, and after the battle of Pavia, in which Francis was defeated, the Roman Pontiff becoming uneasy at the growing power of the Emperor, entered into a league against him, which so exasperated Charles, that in the year 1527 he rushed into Italy, laid siege to Rome, and blockaded Clement in the castle of St. Angelo. Their differences, however, being at length adjusted, they were mutually pledged to the extirpation of Protestantism.

The appointment of a Diet, at Augsburg, to deliberate on the Turkish war, and on the existing disputes in religion, forms a new era in the history of the Reformation. Charles V. was personally present. He arrived on the thirteenth, and the first session was held on the twentieth of June. The Elector of Saxony, selected his most eminent divines to accompany him. Luther, who could not with safety or propriety have appeared at Augsburg, after being proscribed by the edict of Worms, was left at Coburg, in Franconia, at a convenient distance for consultation, so that the principal labor and responsibility devolved upon Melancthon.

It had been deemed advisable to prepare a statement of all the principal articles of the Protestant faith, in order to put the Emperor in full possession of the subject of dispute pending between the Papal and Reformed parties, and to facilitate the dispatch of ecclesiastical affairs. Luther and his friends had

already sent a concise paper to the Elector of Saxony at his own request while at Torgau, on his road to the Diet. It consisted of seventeen articles, which had been already discussed in the conferences at Sultzbach and Smalcald.

The princes, however, solicited the pen of Melancthon to draw up a more extended and accurate statement. It was an important undertaking, and a critical moment. He naturally felt anxious for his own reputation, and while it was his desire to avoid unnecessary offence, he felt as a man of piety the paramount duty he owed to God and to his conscience. Often did he weep over the page—often did he complain with sentiments of genuine humility of his own incompetency.

At length the celebrated *Confession of Augsburg* was completed. Luther's advice had been constantly sought, and there is no reason to doubt, while the mildness of the language scarcely comported with the vehemence of his temper, the skill displayed, and the sentiments stated, met with his entire approbation. It was translated into almost all the languages of Europe, and read in the courts of kings and princes.

Melancthon was desirous that it should be signed by the Theologians, only of the reformed party, alleging as a reason, that the princes would then be more at liberty to use their influence in promoting their mutual wishes; but he could not succeed.

After the despatch of other business, the Protestant princes requested the Emperor to allow their confession to be publicly read. This he would not permit in a full Diet, but commanding them to intrust it to him promised it should be read the next day in his palace; they, however, petitioned to reserve it. The next day in a special assembly of princes and other members of the empire, it was presented to his Imperial Majesty, in Latin and German, with the offer to explain any thing which might appear obscure, and an assurance that they would refer the points of difference in religion to a general council.

The reader shall now have an opportunity of inspecting this far-famed performance. It will be found to contain many sentiments, which to most Christians will appear strange, and which we should be very far from defending, but have nevertheless thought it our duty faithfully to represent them. Let the reader bear in mind that the Reformers are to be honored chiefly for the grand principles of Christian liberty which they so strenuously asserted and maintained in the face of the most powerful opponents; the detail of doctrine and practice will always occasion difference of opinion. That they were too tenacious of their particular creed, and in many cases inconsistent with themselves, cannot be denied—but this period was only the dawn of religious discovery, and it is not to be wondered at that objects appeared to them at first in a very indistinct manner. Many alterations were made in subsequent editions of this very document. They were perpetually, with the zeal of the reformers and the genuine humility of Christians, correcting their own errors.

THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION,

As presented to Charles V. June 25th, A. D. 1530.

Art. I. "Our churches are perfectly agreed that the Nicene decree respecting the unity of the divine essence and the three persons of the godhead, is true and worthy of the fullest belief; namely, that there is one divine essence which is called and which is God, eternal, incorporeal, indivisible, infinite in power, wisdom and goodness, the Creator and preserver of all things, visible and invisible; and yet there are three persons co-equal in power and essence, and co-eternal, the Father the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The term person is used in the same sense as ecclesiastical writers have employed it, to denote a proper subsistence in distinction from a part or quality. Hence our churches condemn every heresy upon this subject that has arisen, as that of the Manichæans, who assert two principles, the good and the evil, the Valentinians, Arians, Eunomians, Mahometans, and all others of a similar description. They condemn also the Samosatenes, both ancient and modern, who contend that there is only one person, and speak of the word and the Holy Spirit in a very wily and wicked manner, affirming that there are no distinct persons, but that the word signifies a mere voice, and the Spirit an influence or motion created in things.

II. "They teach also, that since the fall of Adam, all men are naturally born in sin, destitute of the fear of God and faith in him, and full of concupiscence; and that this disease or original depravity is sinful, even now condemning and exposing to eternal death all who are not born again by baptism and the Holy Spirit.

"They condemn the Pelagians and others who deny the sinful nature of this original depravity, disparaging the benefits which Christ dispenses to the exaltation of human merit, and contending that a man is justified before God by his own powers of reason.

III. "They also teach that the word, or Son of God, assumed human nature in the Virgin's womb, in such a manner that the two natures, the divine and the human, were inseparably united in the one person of Christ, truly God and truly man, born of the Virgin Mary, who really suffered, was crucified, dead and buried, that he might reconcile the Father to us, by his expiatory sacrifice, for both original and actual sins. He descended to the dead, (ad inferos,) and rising again on the third day, ascended into heaven to sit at the Father's right hand, to reign for ever over all creation and to sanctify all who believe in him, by sending his Spirit into their hearts to rule, console and quicken them, that they may be able to resist the devil and the power of sin. Also Christ will return to judge the quick and the dead, &c. according to the apostle's creed.

IV. "They teach also that men cannot be justified before God by their own efforts, merits or works, but are justified freely through Christ by faith, and are received into favor and enjoy the remission of sins through Christ, who by his death presented a satisfaction for sin.

"God imputes this faith for justification before him. Rom. iii. and iv.

V. "The ministry of the gospel and the administration of sacraments were instituted that we might obtain this faith: for the word and the sacraments are used as instruments by the Holy Spirit for the communication of faith, and wherever it is seen in those who hear the gospel; that is, God justifies not for our merits but for Christ's sake.

"They condemn the Anabaptists and others, who suppose that the Holy Spirit comes to men through their own works and preparations, without the external word.

VI. "They teach also that faith ought to be visible in its fruits, and that though good works are to be done as commanded, and conformable to the will of God, we are not to confide in them as meritorious for justification before him. For remission of sin and justification are apprehended by faith, as Christ testifies: 'Having done all these things, say we are unprofitable servants.'

"The ancient writers of the church teach the same doctrine. Ambrose says, 'This is the appointment of God, that whosoever believes in Christ shall be

saved without works, by faith only receiving the remission of sins.'

VII. "They teach also, that the one holy church will continue for ever; but that this church consists of a congregation of holy persons, in which the gospel is rightly taught and the sacraments rightly administered; and as to true unity in the church, it is sufficient to agree concerning the doctrine of the gospel and the administration of sacraments. Nor is it universally necessary that human traditions, rites, or ceremonies instituted by men be the same in all places; so Paul says, 'One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, &c.'

VIII. "Although the church is properly a congregation of holy persons and genuine believers, yet as there is a great mixture of characters in this world, hypocrites and wicked persons, it is lawful to use the sacraments although administered by the wicked according to the language of Christ: 'The Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses's seat,' &c. so that the sacraments and the word of God become efficacious through the appointment and command of Christ, even though dispensed by wicked persons.

"They condemn the Donatists and such persons as deny the lawfulness of making use of the ministry of the wicked in the church, considering such a ministry useless and inefficacious.

IX. "They teach concerning baptism that it is necessary to salvation, because by baptism the grace of God is offered. Infants are to be baptized, who being brought to God by baptism are received into his favor. They condemn the anabaptists who disallow the baptism of infants and affirm that they may be saved without it.

X. "They teach respecting the Lord's supper, that the body and blood of Christ are truly present, and are distributed to the recipients; and disapprove of those who teach otherwise.

XI. "Concerning confession they teach that private absolution may be retained in the churches, although in making confession it is not necessary that every particular delinquency should be enumerated. This indeed is impossible, according to the language of the Psalmist, 'Who can understand his errors?'

XII. "Concerning penitence they teach that the remission of sins may be obtained by such as fall after baptism whenever they repent; and that the church should bestow absolution upon such returning penitents. But repentance may be divided into two parts, the one is contrition or the terrors which agitate the conscience under a sense of guilt; the other is, the faith derived from the gospel, or from absolution, and which believes that sin is pardoned for the sake of Christ, and the conscience pacified and released from its alarms. Upon this good works ought to follow as the fruit of repentance.

"They condemn the Anabaptists who deny that once being justified it is possible to lose the Holy Spirit, as well as those who contend that a sinless perfection is attainable in the present life. They condemn also the Novatians who refuse to absolve such as have fallen after baptism even upon their return to repentance; and they are rejected who assert that the remission of sins is not connected with faith, but is obtained by our charity and good works. They also are rejected who teach that canonical satisfactions are necessary to make amends for eternal punishment or the pains of purgatory.

XIII. "Concerning the use of sacraments, they teach that the sacraments are instituted not only as the signs to men of our religious profession, but rather as the signs and evidences of the will of God to us, to quicken and confirm the faith of those who observe them. The sacraments are to be used therefore, that faith may be increased through believing the promises particularly exhibited and impressed by sacraments. They condemn therefore those who teach that the sacraments can justify as works of merit, denying that faith is requisite in the reception of them.

XIV. "Concerning church order, they maintain that no one ought to teach publicly or to administer the sacraments unless he be lawfully called.

XV. "Concerning rites in the church, they teach that those rites are to be observed which can be observed without sin, and which conduce to the peace and good order of the church: such as certain holidays and feasts. But in reference to these things men are to be admonished lest their consciences should be burdened with the idea that such worship is essential to salvation. They must also be admonished that human traditions instituted with a view of pleasing God, purchasing his favor, and atoning for sin, are contrary to the gospel and the doctrine of faith. Hence vows, traditions respecting meats and drinks, &c. instituted to purchase divine favor and satisfy for sins are useless and contrary to the gospel.

XVI. "Concerning civil matters they teach that lawful civil appointments are good in the sight of God, and that Christians may exercise the office of a magistrate, may judge according to imperial and other existing laws, inflict legal punishments, declare war, take up the military profession, make lawful contracts, hold property, take an oath upon the requisition of a magistrate, marry, and trade.

"They condemn the Anabaptists who forbid the exercise of those civil offices by Christians, and they condemn those who do not place evangelical perfection in the fear of God and in faith, but in abandoning civil offices, because the gospel recommends the righteousness of the heart; it does not however abrogate political institutions, but requires the preservation of them as ordinances of God, and in such ordinances to exercise charity. It becomes Christians therefore to obey their own magistrates and laws, excepting when they command them to do evil, in which case we must obey God rather than men. Acts v.

XVII. "They teach that Christ will appear in judgment at the end of the world, that he will raise the dead, and bestow eternal life and everlasting felicity on his holy and elect people; but he will condemn wicked men and devils to endless torment.

"They condemn the Anabaptists who imagine there will be a termination to the punishment of wicked men and devils; and also others who are dispersing the Jewish notions, that previous to the resurrection of the dead the righteous will occupy a worldly kingdom and oppress the wicked.

XVIII. "Concerning free will they teach that the human will is in a certain sense and in reference to civil concerns and the exercise of reason, free; but it has no efficiency in spiritual concerns without the Holy Spirit, because the natural man does not perceive the things of the Spirit. They are impressed upon the heart by means of the word, through the agency of the Holy Spirit. Augustine delivers the same doctrine in his Hypognosticon, Lib. III. We admit that the will is free in all men who can judge according to reason, not indeed in divine things to begin or go forward independently of God, but only in what pertains to the present life both good and evil. I say *good* referring to those things which arise out of our natural welfare, as the cultivation of the soil, eating and drinking, friendship, clothing, preparing a residence, marrying, tending cattle, acquiring the knowledge of various arts and whatever pertains to the welfare of the present life; all which things subsisting alone, are conducted without a *divine* direction.

By the term *evil* I referred to the worship of idols, murder, &c.

"They condemn the Pelagians and others who teach that we are able to please God supremely without the Holy Spirit and by the power of nature alone; and substantially to obey his precepts. For though nature can in some respects perform external works, as abstaining from theft and murder, it cannot command internal affections, as the fear of God, faith in him, purity, patience, &c.

XIX. "Concerning the cause of sin, they teach that though God is the creator and preserver of our nature, sin originates entirely in the will of evil beings, namely, devils and wicked men, which apart from divine influence turns them aside from God; Christ says of the devil, 'When he speaketh a lie he speaketh of his own.' John viii.

XX. "Our churches are falsely accused of prohibiting good works, for their writings now extant, concerning the ten commandments, and others, testify that they have given salutary instructions respecting every duty of life, what kind of life and what works in every different situation please God. Formerly public instructors taught little of these things, but urged the practice of puerile and needless observances, as certain feasts, fasts, fraternizations, peregrinations, worship of saints, rosaries, and the like. Our adversaries have now learned to do without these useless things, and not to preach them up so much as formerly. They moreover begin to speak of faith respecting which they were before wonderfully silent, although they still obscure the real doctrine of faith by disregarding trembling consciences and commanding the observances of good works in order to *merit* the forgiveness of sin.

"As therefore the doctrine of faith which ought to be regarded as of prime importance in the church, was so long spoken of in an ignorant manner, however it was admitted to be necessary by all, the most profound silence reigning in public discourses respecting justification by faith, though the doctrine of works was continually canvassed, it was deemed proper to admonish the churches on the subject of faith.

"In the first place our works cannot reconcile us to God or merit the remission of sins, the favor of God, grace and justification, for this can only follow from faith, believing that we are received into favor through Christ the only Mediator and atoning sacrifice by whom the Father is reconciled. Consequently whoever trusts in his own works as meritorious, despises the merit and the grace of Christ, and seeks a way to God without Christ, by human strength, although Christ avers, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life.' Paul every where teaches this doctrine concerning faith. Thus, Eph. ii. 'By grace ye are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works,' &c. And lest a caviller should arise, saying that we have devised a new interpretation for the language of Paul, we appeal to the testimony of the Fathers. Augustine, in many of his writings, defends grace and the righteousness of faith in opposition to the merit of works. Ambrose does the same in his call of the Gentiles and elsewhere; for thus he speaks, 'The redemption of Christ would be of little value, and the mercy of God must yield to the merit of human performances if justification were due to antecedent merits, so as to be the reward of works and not of free bounty.'

"Although the ignorant despise this doctrine, pious and trembling consciences derive from it much consolation, because works cannot restore peace to the mind, but faith only, by which they become assured of pleasing God through Christ. So speaks Paul, Rom. v. 'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God.' The whole of his statement refers to the internal warfare of an alarmed conscience, and cannot be understood unless this warfare is experienced. Ignorant and profane persons, therefore, judge most erroneously upon this subject, who dream that there is no such thing as Christian justification, but only a philosophical and civil one.

"In former times, the consciences of men who did not listen to the gospel, were much tormented respecting the doctrine of works, some were driven into deserts and monasteries, hoping to merit grace by a monastic life; others devised other works to purchase favor and make satisfaction for sin. The greatest necessity, therefore, existed to give a clear statement of the doctrine of faith in Christ, that the trembling conscience should not seek consolation in vain, and should be instructed how by faith in Christ, favor, pardon and justification were to be obtained.

"Men are instructed that this term faith does not signify merely historical knowledge, such as wicked men and devils possess, but it includes not only a credit of the historical fact, but of the effect resulting, namely, the remission of sins, that is, that through Christ we enjoy mercy, justification and forgiveness. Whoever knows that through Christ he has a merciful Father, truly knows God, knows that he is under his care, loves him and calls upon his name; not living without God, like the heathen. Devils and wicked men cannot believe in the doctrine of remission, consequently they hate God as an enemy, neither calling upon him nor expecting any good at his hands. Augustine delivers the same doctrine respecting faith, stating that this term is used in Scripture, not for such knowledge as the wicked possess, but for that confidence which consoles and inspirits trembling minds.

"Our churches, moreover, teach that good works are necessary; not as meritorious in procuring divine mercy, but such is the will of God, for remission of sins and peace of conscience can only be obtained by faith; and the Holy Spirit is received by faith, and the heart being renewed, new affections are imparted that good works may be produced. Independently of the Holy Spirit, human nature is full of vile affections, and totally incapable of doing any thing good in the divine sight, but, under diabolical influence, men are impelled to various sins, impious sentiments and open immorality. Thus we see philosophers aiming to live in a moral manner, but they were unable to do so, and fell into open vice. Such is human imbecility when under its own guidance without faith and destitute of the Holy Spirit.

"Hence it is apparent that our doctrine cannot be accused of prohibiting good works, but is worthy of commendation as showing in what manner they can be performed. For without faith, human nature cannot fulfil the first or second precepts of the law; without faith, it cannot call upon God, or expect any thing from him, it cannot bear the cross, but seeks human supports and confides in them. When faith and confidence in God are wanting, vain desires and carnal principles reign in the heart. Hence, Christ says, 'Without me, ye can do nothing,' John xv. And the church says, 'Without thy Spirit, there is nothing in man, nothing good.'

XXI. "Concerning the worship of saints, they teach that their memory may be exhibited, that we may imitate their faith and good works, in the same manner as the Emperor could imitate the example of David in waging war to expel the Turks from the empire, both being kings; but Scripture never instructs us to invoke saints or to implore assistance from them, because it presents Christ to us as the only Mediator, sacrifice, priest and intercessor. To him we are to apply, who promises to hear

our supplications and who approves our worship, that is, that we resort to his aid in all our afflictions. 1 John ii. 'If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.'

"Such is nearly a summary of our doctrine, which it may be seen does not disagree with Scripture nor with the universal church, nor with the Romish church so far as may be ascertained from its writers, so that we are injuriously treated by those who denounce us as heretics. But the dissension between us refers to certain abuses which have in an unauthorized manner crept into the churches, in respect to which difference it becomes the bishops to exercise lenity and to tolerate us on account of this our confession, because the canons themselves are not so severe as to require the same rites in all places, nor were the same rites ever exactly the same in all the churches. However for the most part, the ancient rites are observed amongst us. It is therefore calumnious to represent all ceremonies and all the ancient institutions as abolished in our churches. But it has been the public complaint that abuses have adhered to the practice of the usual rites, and these, since pious sincere consciences could not approve them, are in some measure corrected."

ARTICLES

In which the particular abuses that have been changed are recited.

"Since we do not differ from the Catholic church in articles of faith, but only omit some few abuses which are both novel and are received contrary to the canons through the corruption of the times, we implore your Imperial Majesty to give us a gracious hearing respecting these changes and the reasons for them, that the people may not be compelled against their consciences to observe such abuses. Let not your Imperial Majesty listen to those who stir up hatred and distribute monstrous calumnies against us; by which means the minds of good men being irritated against us, an occasion of disagreement and discord is furnished. For your Imperial Majesty will doubtless perceive that our system both of doctrine and ceremonies is superior to what it is represented by the wicked and malevolent. Besides the truth is not to be collected from the report of the multitude or the railings of adversaries, and it is easy to perceive that nothing conduces so much to preserve the true dignity of worship and the piety of the people, as the proper administration of the public services of the church.*

Sacrament in both kinds.—"The Sacrament is administered to the laity in both kinds and not to the ministers only, because it is commanded by Jesus Christ—'Drink ye *all* of this.' Whence it is apparent that *all* were to partake of the cup; and lest there should be any dispute whether this injunction were applicable to the people, Paul testifies in the Epistle to the Corinthians that the *whole church* commonly received the Supper in both kinds. This was a long continued practice, and it is uncertain who first introduced a different custom. Cyprian and Jerome relate that this was the usual practice, and the decrees of several Popes command it. We do not admit the division of the Sacrament, as such a practice would not comport with the original institution.

Marriage of Priests.—"Upon occasion of a public complaint that some of the Priests had violated their vow of celibacy, Pope Pius is reported to have said that there were several reasons why the priesthood should be forbid to marry, but many more and weightier why they should return to the practice of it. Our priests wishing to avoid all occasion of scandal, marry and plead its legality, *first* from the language of Paul, 'Let every one of you have his own wife,' and 'it is better to marry than to burn.' *Secondly*, from the words of Christ, 'All cannot receive this saying, for some are eunuchs.'

"It is in vain to fight against the laws of nature and the appointment of God. Paul also expressly requires of a bishop that he be married. In Germany about four hundred years ago priests were compelled to marry, for they were so opposed to it that the Archbishop of Mentz, who was going to publish a decree of the Roman Pontiff on the subject, was borne down by a tumult raised by the incensed priests, so that not only was marriage forbidden in future, but contrary to all divine and human laws, those which had been contracted were dissolved.

"God himself has pronounced marriage to be honorable, and even in every well constituted heathen state it was equally sanctioned by the laws, and yet now the priests are to suffer capital punishments for it! Paul expressly asserts that forbidding to marry is a doctrine of devils. 1 Tim. iv. And be it remembered, that as no human *law*, so no human *vow* can annul the command of God.

The Mass.—"Our churches explode the general opinion of the merit and application of the mass, as false and impious; the state of the controversy may be ascertained from the following abridgment of our arguments.

1. "The remission of sins as before stated, Art. iv. is enjoyed through faith in Christ, consequently it is impossible to obtain this remission through any other means, or without the exercise of faith.

2. "The sufferings of Christ were expiatory; and designed as an oblation not only for original guilt, but for all kinds of transgression. 'We are sanctified,' says the apostle, 'by the sacrifice of Christ once for all.'—'By the one offering of himself he hath for ever perfected them that are sanctified.' The whole epistle to the Hebrews is occupied in establishing this doctrine, that the sacrifice of Christ is the only and exclusive means of pardon and reconciliation with God.

3. "In the institution of the Lord's Supper, Christ does not command the priests to offer any sacrifice either for the living or the dead. By what authority therefore is this service appointed as an offering for sin? The mass is absurdly applied to the release of souls from purgatory, whereas it was instituted for the purpose of *remembering* Christ, and thus confirming the faith and comforting the minds of his people. This misapplication therefore contrary to the authority of Scripture, is censurable as a novel and impious service.

4. "A ceremony without faith is of no avail either to those who perform it or to others, for Christ affirms they are the true worshippers who worship the Father in spirit and in truth; and the apostle states that by *faith* Abel offered a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, and 'without *faith* it is impossible to please God.'

5. "The proper application of the blessings procured by Jesus Christ is through faith, as Paul testifies in the third chapter of the Romans. 'Whom God hath set forth a propitiation through faith in

* In giving the remaining part of the Confession it has not been deemed requisite to adhere so closely to the words of the writer, but rather to furnish a correct abstract of the statement, because the *doctrinal* is the most important part and furnishes a view of the sentiments of the Reformers, which Protestants will naturally feel anxious exactly to know; and because it would be tedious and useless to detail all that at the time of the Diet of Augsburg, it was thought necessary to state respecting those abuses of which but one opinion now prevails amongst Protestants.

his blood.' Consequently this application cannot be through or by the merit of any other work.

6. "The institution of the Sacrament is diametrically opposed to this abuse of it, for while there is no command respecting any offering for the sins of the living or the dead, we are enjoined to partake of the body and blood of Christ and for the express purpose of remembering him. The great design of the institution is to exercise and excite our faith in receiving this pledge of love. Besides, the communion of saints was intended that the ministers of the church might impart the body and blood of Christ to others. That this was the primitive purpose of the institution we learn from Paul, 'the wine, is it not the *communion* of the blood of Christ, and the bread, is it not the *communion* of the body of Christ?'

Confession.—"This practice is not abolished amongst us, but the people are instructed, that a particular enumeration of all their delinquencies is not necessary, for in fact it is impossible. 'Who,' says David, 'can understand his errors?' 'The heart of man,' says Jeremiah, 'is deceitful and desperately wicked.' But if no sins could be remitted unless they were distinctly mentioned, a tender conscience could never be at rest, because the greatest number of our sins are perhaps neither observed nor can they be remembered. The fathers also sanction this omission. We do not therefore burden the conscience, but this we teach, that men must bring forth the fruits of genuine repentance, obedience, the fear of God, faith, holy joy, purity and a universal 'newness of mind.' We retain and enforce contrition, faith, remission and forgiveness of sin, reformation of life, and mitigation of present punishments.

Distinction of meats and other traditions.—"It has been commonly believed by ecclesiastics as well as the vulgar, that a regard to the distinction of meats and drinks and other human traditions may conduce to the remission of sins. Hence an innumerable multitude of ceremonies, fasts and observances, have been appointed. Many evils have resulted from this idea of traditions: as

1. "Such an opinion obscures the doctrine of grace and justification by faith, which is an essential part of the gospel, and ought to be clearly stated in all the public assemblies of the church. The merit of Christ alone, as the cause of justification, is stated by Paul, but this reliance on human tradition annuls it.

2. "It operates further to abrogate the divine precepts, because tradition is more consulted than the authority of God, and the whole of Christianity is represented as consisting in the observance of certain days, rites, fasts and clothing. These observances are dignified by the name of a spiritual and perfect way, but the commands of God to attend to our duties, the education of our children, and to obey our rulers are deemed worldly and imperfect, and far inferior to these other splendid services.

3. "Tender consciences have been exceedingly disturbed by this doctrine of human traditions, from the conviction that they could not keep them all, though they have been represented as necessary to acceptable worship. Gerson mentions many who have fallen into absolute despair, and some who have even committed suicide, because they found it utterly impossible to observe the traditions, and could not be consoled by the doctrine of grace and justification by faith.

"We teach that none can obtain the forgiveness of sin or merit justification by keeping the traditions of men, consequently they cannot be essential to the proper worship of God. The evidence of this is to be deduced from the Scriptures. Christ excuses the apostles from regarding the customary traditions, 'Do not ye understand that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth,' &c. Mat. xv. 17—20. 'The kingdom of God is not meat and drink,' &c. Rom. xiv. 17. 'Let no man judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect or a holy day,' &c. Col. ii. 16. Again, 'if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world are ye subject to ordinances,' &c. Col. ii. 20. 'Why,' says Peter, 'tempt ye God to put a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?' Acts. xv. 10. 'The spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, ... commanding to abstain from meats,' &c. 1 Tim. iv. 1--3.

"To this our adversaries object that we prohibit discipline and the mortification of the flesh, but this is incorrect, for we always teach that Christians ought to bear afflictions; and to be exercised with various afflictions, and to be crucified with Christ, is true and not pretended mortification.

"At the same time we do observe some traditions, but the people are admonished against trusting in them for justification before God, or supposing they commit sin by an omission of them.

Monastic Vows.—"Our opinions on this subject will be best understood by considering that such was formerly the state of the monasteries, that every day many things were done in violation of canonical authority. In the time of Augustine, the colleges were free colleges, and after discipline became lax, vows were every where made that it should be restored, and with these vows for the restoration of good order were connected many new observances, which were imposed, contrary to the canon, upon many at an improper age. Multitudes of both sexes were allured into these establishments and subjected to the severest discipline.

"To these evils others were added, especially such a persuasion of the efficacy of vows, that they were even represented as meriting the remission of sins and justification before God, and a monastic life was not only extolled above every secular duty and every religious office, but made to supersede the precepts of the gospel itself.

"Formerly, there were schools attached to the monasteries, for the purpose of communicating instruction in sacred and secular literature; very important they were, and serviceable in supplying the church with pastors and bishops. How different the case is now, it is needless to state. Instead of being appropriated to learning, now a monastic life is pretended to be a life of perfection, conducive to justification, and far preferable to any other vocation, to which even God himself has appointed men by his providence.

"These are not exaggerated statements for the purpose of rendering the monks odious, but simple facts adduced to illustrate the nature of our doctrines. First, in reference to matrimony; we admit all to marry who are not disposed to celibacy, because vows cannot annul the divine appointment and command. 'Let every one have his own wife.' It was declared at the creation of the human race, 'it is not good for man to be alone.' What can be said in reply to this?—let the obligation of a vow be asserted as firmly as you please, it cannot be maintained that it discharges a man from his duty to obey God. The canons expressly teach, that in every vow the command of a superior is to be obeyed, how much more then is the authority of God to be regarded! If no reasons can exist for changing the obligation of vows, the Roman Pontiff himself cannot supersede them, for surely it is not lawful for a man to rescind an obligation which is purely divine. But the Popes very wisely judge,

that the claims of equity are to be observed in enforcing this obligation, and consequently, we often read of their exercising a dispensing power in reference to vows. Many of the canons rescind vows which have been made previous to the age of fifteen, and one of them states eighteen, because it is presumed that at so early a period, a youth is incapable of forming a proper judgment on a subject which is to influence the whole of his future life; hence a great number are furnished with an excuse to desert the monasteries, because they made their vow previous to the required age. After all, were it conceded that the violation of a vow is reprehensible, it does not follow that marriage ought to be dissolved, which as Augustine observes, is a serious obligation, whatever some may after contracting it suppose.

"We plead also another reason to prove that vows are not obligatory, namely, that all religious services which are merely of human appointment, having no authority from God, and represented as essential to forgiveness and justification, are impious, because 'in vain,' says Christ, 'do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men:' and Paul plainly states that remission and justification are obtained by the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ, and through faith in his name. The monks teach that these blessings are procurable by those observances which are of human invention, and what is this but detracting from the honor of Christ, obscuring his glory and denying the Scripture doctrine of justification by faith? Vows are therefore both impious and vain; opposed to the gospel, and a shameful substitution of a man's own works for the propitiation of Christ. 'Whoever of you,' says Paul, 'are justified by works are fallen from grace.'

"Moreover, the monks represent their mode of life as the state of perfection, because they obey both the precepts of the gospel and the appointments of councils. This is a most awful error; for they boast of the meritorious works of supererogation and conceive they not only obey the precepts themselves, but possess a superabundant righteousness to satisfy for the sins of others.

"When the people are assured that the monkish is the only perfect life, the precepts and the whole service of God are undervalued, because Christian perfection is to live in the habitual fear of God, to confide in his favor through faith in Christ, to seek and to depend on his help in all the various duties which devolve upon us in our respective situations, to be holy in our conduct and to be devoted to our proper callings. Christian perfection consists not in celibacy, nor in mendicity and mean attire.

"The examples are sufficiently numerous of persons, who deserting their families and offices in civil life, have withdrawn into monasteries; and this they call flying from the world and pursuing a kind of life more acceptable to God; but surely to keep his commandments and not the traditions of men, is alone deserving the name of a good and perfect kind of life.

Ecclesiastical Power.—"This subject has proved a fertile source of the most violent contentions, while the ecclesiastical and civil power have been united in the same ruler. The Roman Pontiffs relying on their influence and authority, have not only oppressed the consciences of men with violent excommunications and appointed new modes of worship, but have even aimed to seize and appropriate imperial sceptres and gain the dominion of the world. This conduct has been long and often condemned by learned and pious men in our churches, and we have endeavored to console afflicted consciences by pointing out the distinction between the power of the church and the power of the sword, and showing how each ought to be revered as appointed by God for the welfare of mankind.

"The power of bishops we apprehend to be a power or authority from God to preach the gospel, to remit and retain sins, and to administer the ordinances. The commission of Christ to his disciples, is thus expressed, 'As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you. Receive the Holy Ghost—whosoever sins ye remit, they shall be remitted, and whosoever sins ye retain, they shall be retained.'—'Go and preach my gospel to every creature,' &c.

"This power is to be exercised only in teaching and preaching the gospel, and in administering the ordinances or services of their proper calling, because they are not entrusted with the temporal but spiritual concerns of men and whatever relates to an eternal life. These things belong to the ministry, and the gospel is 'the *power* of *God* unto salvation to every one that believeth.' Ecclesiastical power, therefore, is to be exercised in the preaching of the gospel and in reference to eternal things, but not to impede or control the political administration of empires. Nor is it the business of the magistrate to legislate for the conscience, but for the temporal interests of men to protect them from injuries, to coerce them by the sword, to inflict corporeal punishments, to administer civil justice and to maintain social order and peace. The ecclesiastical must not therefore be confounded with the civil power. The former is to teach and to administer the ordinances, but ought not to interfere with another office, to aim at secular dominion, to abrogate the law of the civil magistrate, to prevent due subordination, or to obstruct the course of ordinary justice. 'My kingdom,' exclaimed the Saviour, 'is not of this world.' Again, 'who constituted me a judge or a divider amongst you?' And the apostle intimates, that 'the weapons of our warfare are *not carnal*, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds and casting down every *imagination* that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God.'

"If bishops possess the power of the sword, it is given them not by the authority of Scripture, but by the command of kings and princes.

"Considerable disputes have been agitated, whether bishops or pastors possess an authority to institute ceremonies in the church, and to prescribe feasts, fasts and other observances. They who assign this right to bishops, allege this sentence, 'I have many things to say to you, but ye cannot bear it now, but when he, the Spirit of truth, shall come, he will lead you into all truth:' and they plead the example of apostolic injunctions which prohibited the use of blood and things strangled—which changed the day of the Sabbath contrary as it appears to the original appointment of the law. But we reply, that the bishops have no authority to introduce another gospel. Besides, to establish traditions, is contrary to the Scripture, and the glory of Christ is tarnished when we expect by such observances to merit remission of sins and justification before God. This vain hope has occasioned an almost infinite number of traditions to creep into the church.

"If the bishops are endowed with authority to load the churches with endless traditions and thus to ensnare tender consciences, why does Scripture so frequently prohibit the multiplication of traditionary services? Why does it denominate them doctrines of devils?

"It may be inquired, what then is to become of our dominical days, and similar institutions? The reply is, that bishops or pastors may make appointments for the ordinary regulation of the churches, but not represent these services as necessary to the

remission of sins, or in any degree so obligatory on the consciences of men, as that they are to imagine themselves guilty of any crime in omitting them. Such appointments conduce to the preservation of love and peace, that all things may be done decently and in order, but are not to be oppressive to the conscience, or represented as essential to salvation.

"Such are the principal articles of our faith. We have omitted to notice many other abuses and subjects of violent contention in order to avoid prolixity. We are firmly persuaded that these our sentiments are conformable to the prophetic and apostolic writings, and the general opinion of the true universal church of Christ. We are ready to furnish any additional information or explanation whenever it shall be deemed necessary; in the mean time we beseech the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ that he would preserve, purify and increase his own church, which is redeemed by the blood of his Son.

"Your Imperial Majesty's

"Faithful and submissive servants:

"John, Duke Elector of Saxony.
George, Marquis of Brandenburg.
Ernest, Duke of Luneburg.
Philip, Landgrave of Hesse.
John Frederic, Duke of Saxony.
Francis, Duke of Lunenburg.
Wolfgang, Prince of Anhalt.
Senate and Magistrates of Nuremberg.
Senate of Reutlingen."

The preceding confession was read in the German language, by Christian Beyer, Chancellor of Saxony. A copy was also presented at the same time in *Latin*, by Pontanus. Cœlestine relates that when he gave it to one of the Emperor's secretaries, he had the boldness to exclaim, "by the grace and through the help of God, this confession will prevail against the gates of hell." This, however, was more probably said at some other less public moment.

It is reported of William, duke of Bavaria, who vehemently opposed the doctrine of the gospel, that as soon as the confession was read, he asked Eckius whether they might overthrow this doctrine out of the Holy Scriptures; "No," replied Eckius, "by the Holy Scripture we cannot overthrow it, but we may by the fathers." Upon which Cardinal Albert, Archbishop of Mentz, said to the duke of Bavaria, "Behold, how finely our divines support us! The Protestants prove what they say out of the Holy Scriptures, but we have our doctrine without Scripture."

The Emperor immediately dismissed the assembly, and entered into a serious consultation with the Popish fraternity respecting the proper line of conduct to be adopted. Some were for enforcing the edict of Worms and compelling the consciences of their opponents to submit to imperial and ecclesiastical authority, others were desirous of selecting a certain number of learned men to consult and advise the Emperor. But the prevailing opinion, which Melancthon had anticipated, was to procure a confutation of the Protestant articles from the Popish divines, which should be read in a full Diet. Faber, Eckius, Conrad de Wimpina, Conrad Collinus, John Cochlæus, and other select associates undertook and speedily completed the work. It was reviewed by the Emperor and the Catholic princes, who advised the omission of all expressions calculated to promote irritation. On the third of August, the Diet was convened to hear it; and on the sixth Melancthon thus expresses his opinion in a letter to Luther. "At length we have heard the confutation, and at the same time the Emperor's sentiments which were sufficiently bitter. Before this document was read, he declared that he was resolved to abide by the opinions he had caused to be there stated, and desired that our princes would adopt the same; but if they refused, he as the defender of the church would no longer tolerate the German schism. This was the sum of his oration, which, infamous as it was, the Catholics welcomed with prodigious applause. The same may be said of their *puerile* confutation, for absolutely it is more foolish than any thing which even Faber has published." In another letter to Luther, two days afterwards, he intimates "that their adversaries had used threatening language to terrify the princes from their adherence to the doctrines of the Reformation;" and it appears that they had distinctly assured the Elector John, that "unless he would abjure the Lutheran doctrines which he had embraced, the Emperor would raise an armed force to oblige him, and that he should be deprived of his dignities, his possessions, and even his life, with all who professed the same faith, their wives and children." It was some time before the Elector could recover from the agitation which such a violent philippic had produced, but the effect was only temporary.

"God's word," says Luther, "is powerful; the more it is persecuted, the more and further it spreadeth itself abroad. Behold the Imperial Diet at Augsburg, which doubtless is the last trumpet before the dreadful day of judgment—how raged the world there against the word."

Though many articles of the confession were approved; others, especially the fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, twentieth and twenty-first were totally rejected. The second respecting original sin, they admitted, excepting the definition which appeared to them more descriptive of actual than original sin; the eleventh was only objected to in reference to what was said of confession; and the several anti-Catholic intimations in the twelfth and fifteenth were of course the subjects of animadversion. They affirm in contradiction to the second part of the Augsburg confession, that communion in one kind, the celibacy of priests, the mass, monastic vows, and the other subjects of objection introduced by the Protestants, are not abuses, but religious and holy usages commanded by Scripture and confirmed by tradition. At the same time, they admit that some degree of reformation in the practice of them was requisite, to which the Emperor would pay due attention. They finished by expressing a hope that the Protestants would return to the communion of the church.

To the concluding intimation, the Elector of Saxony, who spoke in the name of the Protestants, replied, that they were ready to do any thing which conscience would allow for the sake of promoting union in religion, that if the Catholics could prove from Scripture that they had advanced any error, it should be recanted, that they were ready to furnish any explanation that might be demanded, and that they wished to have a copy of the refutation of their articles. This request the Emperor refused, but two days afterwards, offered it upon condition of its not being published. This was not agreed to, but seventeen persons were nominated by the Catholics to discuss religious differences, whose conferences were however of no avail. The Elector of Brandenburg pressed the necessity of satisfying the Emperor, by uniting in matters of faith with the princes and members of the empire, otherwise they might incur the reproach of involving Germany in war and tumult. After due deliberation, they communicated their answer by their deputy George Brucke to this purpose, "that they took it ill to be threatened, that the Emperor would not give them a sufficient hearing, and that they were not allowed but upon a severe condition, a copy of the refuta-

tion of their articles. It was expected they should assent to it without examination, which their consciences disallowed, and notwithstanding the promises of a general council in the last Diet at Spires, it had not been convened." To this the Roman deputies replied in a defensive and explanatory paper, and finally it was agreed at the suggestion of the Protestants, that a smaller number should be appointed for the determination of the present controversy. Two princes, two lawyers, and three divines were selected on each side conformably with this resolution. The Catholics were, the bishop of Augsburg, Henry, duke of Brunswick, the chancellor of the archbishop of Cologne, and the chancellor of the marquis of Baden, John Eckius, Conrad Wimpina and John Cochlæus: the Protestants were, John Frederic, son of the Elector of Saxony, George, marquis of Brandenburg; the lawyers, Gregory Pontanus and Heller; and the divines, Melancthon, Brentius and Schnepfius.

After conferring together they managed a mode of expression, in which fifteen articles of the Augsburg confession were mutually subscribed and only six remained; of these, three were only in part disputed, and the rest remitted to the second division of the confession, upon which they still continued and were likely to remain disunited.

The state of the question being reported to the Diet, it was resolved that a smaller committee consisting of three on each side, two lawyers and one divine would be more available. Melancthon was nominated for the Protestants, and Eckius for the Catholics. The principal points of debate were the mass, vows, and the celibacy of priests. The Catholics agreed that the priests who were married, might live with their wives, but they would make no concessions respecting the mass and vows.

The Emperor was extremely anxious to reconcile contending parties, and endeavored to win over the Protestant princes by the most attentive behavior and the most alluring promises. In particular he urged the Elector of Saxony and the landgrave of Hesse; but to their immortal honor be it recorded, they were neither to be allured nor alarmed into a dereliction of the noble but too often persecuted cause of Christian liberty.

All hopes of an accommodation being now at an end, the worst was anticipated. "We expect," says Melancthon, "violent measures, for no moderation can satisfy the Popish faction. They, in fact, seek our destruction. Pray that God may preserve us."

"An apology for the Augsburg confession," drawn up by Melancthon, was on the twenty-second of September, presented by the Protestant princes to the Emperor, who declined receiving it. Though not published till the following year, the insertion of a few short extracts in this place seems appropriate and will be acceptable.

"To represent justification as by faith *only*, has been considered objectionable, though Paul concludes that a 'man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law;' that we are 'justified freely by his grace,' (Rom. iii. 24, 28,) and that 'it is the gift of God not of works lest any man should boast.' Eph. ii. 8, 9. If the use of the exclusive term *only* be deemed inadmissible, let them expunge from the writings of the apostle the exclusive phrases *by grace, not of works, the gift of God*, and others of similar import. We exclude all notions of human merit, but not as our adversaries calumniously insinuate, the use of sacraments and means. It has been already stated that faith cometh by hearing, and we most highly estimate the ministry of the word. Love and obedience must be connected with faith, so that they are only excluded as the meritorious source of justification.

"We state that love is essentially connected with faith, for according to Paul, 'In Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love.' But we do not admit that the remission of sins and reconciliation with God, are obtained for the sake of love as a meritorious act, or for any other kind of work, but by faith only, or faith properly so called, because the promise of forgiveness respects the exercise of faith. It is faith which assents to the promise, and is every where referred to in Scripture.

"In our churches the members are instructed into the true purpose of the sacrament as a sign and testimony of the free forgiveness of sin, a doctrine highly consolatory to trembling spirits, and in which they ought to be admonished to place their confidence. The preaching of the gospel and the legitimate use of the sacraments constitute with us a perpetual sacrifice, and the resort to our services is far more numerous than to those of our adversaries, because they are more useful and intelligible. But their doctrines, neither the learned nor the ignorant, can comprehend. Truth, holy doctrine, the proper use of the sacraments, affectionate discourses, constitute the proper ornaments of churches, but wax tapers, golden vases and other things of a similar nature, though ornamental in themselves, do not constitute the glory of the Christian church: and if our adversaries mistake these for worship, instead of the preaching of the gospel and the exercises of faith, they must be numbered amongst those whom Daniel describes, as 'honoring their own God with gold and silver, and with precious stones and pleasant things.' Dan. xi. 38.

"We are not fond of invidious comparisons, but as our adversaries are perpetually urging them, we cannot omit mentioning some of their evil practices. What mischief is done by the profanation of the mass! What evils result from their law of celibacy! What a manifest piece of idolary is the worship of saints! Then will it be affirmed there is nothing reprehensible in the ambition of their pontiffs, who for upwards of four hundred years, have waged an incessant war with our Emperors in Italy, and sometimes even in Germany itself, arming sons and fathers, relatives and citizens against each other? And if the records of history be searched to ascertain the true causes of such hostilities, I use the most moderate terms when I say, no cause, worthy of the station and character of these dignitaries, can be found. What mischief ensues from the delegation of unfit persons to the sacerdotal office and from trafficing in benefices! And is there no fault in the dangerous disputes that are prevalent, which indeed might be pardoned if the purity of doctrine were preserved in the churches? But, what impious opinions and traditions are introduced and practised, let the writings of canonists and divines testify, which abound in discussions, some useless, and some opposed to the gospel of Christ. Then, in interpreting Scripture, they trifle and take the most unwarrantable liberties."

On the subject of ecclesiastical jurisdiction and the power of bishops, Melancthon had conceded in his conferences with the Papist committee more than many of his own party thoroughly approved, and yet Luther himself in his admonition to the princes of the empire, allowed that the bishops might retain their authority both civil and ecclesiastical, if they would employ it to the glory of God and not support the Pope's supremacy. The fact was, that Melancthon entertained a hope of an essential reformation in the spirit and conduct of the bishops, while Luther despaired of the possibility of effecting it, and was therefore extremely cautious of any concession to their authority. In all doctrinal points Melancthon proved himself a firm, enlightened, inflexible Protestant. The testimony

of a good conscience supported him amidst the perpetual calumnies which his zealous, disinterested and pious labors incurred; and if, as many suspected, the Catholics selected him and Eckius, finally to adjust the points of difference from an expectation that his characteristic gentleness and dislike of contention would induce him to sacrifice truth to peace, they were completely disappointed. It is agreed he went as far as possible, and further probably than his stern friend Luther could have been induced to do; but it would be difficult to prove that impetuosity and violence are conducive to conviction, or in any respect auxiliary to truth. Inflexibility is not the more estimable for assuming a military dress or a menacing air.

Mosheim has judiciously remarked, "it was in these conferences at Augsburg that the spirit and character of Melancthon appeared in their true and genuine colors; and it was here that the votaries of Rome exhausted their efforts to gain over to their party this pillar of the Reformation, whose abilities and virtues added such a lustre to the Protestant cause. His humane and gentle spirit was apt to sink into a kind of yielding softness, under the influence of mild and generous treatment. And accordingly while his adversaries soothed him with fair words and flattering promises, he seemed to melt as he spoke, and in some measure to comply with their demands; but when they so far forgot themselves as to make use of imperious language and menacing terms, then did Melancthon appear in a very different point of light; then a spirit of intrepidity, ardor and independence animated all his words and actions, and he looked down with contempt on the threats of power, the frowns of fortune, and the fear of death. The truth is, that in this great and good man, a soft and yielding temper was joined with the most inviolable fidelity and the most invincible attachment to the truth." Vol. 4. Page 96.

In the midst of these multifarious transactions a correspondence was maintained between Melancthon and many persons of distinguished character. Scarcely a day passed in which there was not some kind of communication with Luther, who suggested various consolatory sentiments to his friend, and frequently rallied him with some severity respecting his apprehensive state of mind. The following illustrative anecdote, however, ought by no means to be omitted, because it evinces, notwithstanding the imputations of historians, the sterling integrity of his principle amidst his constitutional infirmities. After the Protestant confession had been presented to the council, Cardinal Campegius and his party inquired of Melancthon if he still persisted in his opinion. Upon which he replied, that "neither he nor his associates could abandon the known truth, and he besought him not to denounce their sentiments, but to allow them to avow what they never could deny with a good conscience." Campegius answered, "I cannot allow it, for the successor of Peter is infallible." "Well then," rejoined Melancthon, "we commend ourselves and our concerns to God. If HE be for us who can be against us?—We shall await with patience whatever may happen to us. In our provinces we have upwards of forty thousand persons including poor ministers, their families and parishioners, whose spiritual interest we cannot abandon, but will do whatever we are able for them, praying for the help of Jesus Christ whose cause we espouse; and in our calling we are prepared to labor with patience, and endure all difficulties. If it be necessary we would, if such be the will of God, rather fight and die than betray so many souls."

The decree of the Diet was at length published on the nineteenth of November. It assumed a tone of high authority, asserting the Catholic doctrines and condemning the tenets of Protestantism. The people were exhorted to hear mass, to pray to the Virgin and to the saints, to observe holy days; images and statues were ordered to be replaced where they had been removed, and all alterations or innovations in religion were strictly prohibited. This decree was to be put in execution whatever opposition or appeals might be made against it, and all who refused to obey it subjected themselves to be put under the ban of the empire, and were declared incapable of being admitted to the Imperial Chamber. The princes, states, and cities which had rejected the Papal authority, were required under pain of exemplary punishment to return to their allegiance to Rome. The only consolatory circumstance amidst this imperial thunder, was a faint whisper that an application should be made to the Pope respecting the appointment of a general council within six months to decide religious controversies.

The Protestants in general, and the anxious mind of Melancthon in particular, could not but feel deeply affected with this termination of the conferences at Augsburg. The disposition of their adversaries was sufficiently obvious, for in addition to this persecuting decree the Emperor had pledged himself to unite with the confederated forces of the Popish princes, to compel the execution of it, and maintain the established religion.

The Protestant princes retired from the Diet with the strongest feelings of dissatisfaction and disappointment. Instead of despairing however, they re-assembled at Smalcald, and the result of this conference was, the adoption of *defensive* measures for the preservation of their religious liberties.

Soon after these transactions Melancthon with Luther and other divines, met together for the purpose of consulting about the proper measures to be adopted in the present exigency, and after having spent some time in prayer to God from whom alone they could expect adequate assistance, Melancthon was suddenly called out of the room, from which he retired under great depression of spirits. He saw during his absence some of the elders of the reformed churches with their parishioners and families. Several children were also brought hanging at the breast, while others a little older were engaged in prayer. This reminded him of the prophetic language, "out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength, because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger." Psalm viii: 2. Animated by this interesting scene he returned to his friends with a disencumbered mind and a cheerful countenance. Luther astonished at this sudden change said, "What now! what has happened to you Philip, that you are become so cheerful?" "O sirs," replied Melancthon, "let us not be discouraged, for I have seen our noble protectors, and such as I will venture to say will prove invincible against every foe!" "And pray," returned Luther, thrilling with surprise and pleasure, "Who and where are these powerful heroes?"—"Oh!" said Melancthon, "*they are the wives of our parishioners and their little children, whose prayers I have just witnessed—prayers which I am satisfied our God will hear:* for as our heavenly Father and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has never despised nor rejected our supplications, we have reason to trust that he will not in the present alarming crisis."

During the Imperial Diet at Augsburg, Albert, Archbishop of Mentz, had by some means obtained a Bible, and read it attentively for four hours, when one of his council suddenly entering his chamber, asked with much astonishment what his Highness was doing with that book? To which he replied,

"I know not what this book is, but sure I am, all that is written therein is quite against us."

CHAPTER IX.

Smalcald—Unfavorable circumstances announced—The Emperor retracts at Ratisbon and agrees to the suspension of all legal processes against the Protestants—Death of the Elector John—Melancthon's Funeral Oration—His Epitaph—Succeeded by John Frederic—The Emperor urges on the Pope a general Council—Continuance of the Sacramental Controversy—Melancthon and Bucer confer with the Landgrave—A vain attempt at Leipsic to restore union between contending parties—Francis I. urges Melancthon to repair to France—Their Correspondence—Entreaties of the Langœan family to the same purpose—Bellay goes into Germany and invites Melancthon into France—The Elector interposes to prevent the journey—Henry VIII. invites Melancthon into England—Their Correspondence—The King of England's eagerness in despatching Messengers to France to prevent Melancthon's continuance there if he were arrived, or otherwise to dissuade him from going—Curious original documents on the subject—A larger Commission sent into Germany—Melancthon's communication with Archbishop Cranmer—State of his health—Takes a journey—Injurious reports circulated—Writes against the Anabaptists—Conferences with Bucer and Capito. 1531 to 1536.

Two unfavorable events were announced to the Protestant princes, when they were assembled a second time in the early part of the year 1531, at Smalcald; the one the election of Ferdinand to be king of the Romans, which was considered as an artful proceeding of his brother the Emperor, for the purpose of rendering the imperial crown hereditary in his family, and consequently subversive of the liberties of the empire—the other the commencement of prosecutions against some of their number on account of their religious principles. It was deemed immediately necessary to renew their defensive league, and by means of their ambassadors to implore the protection and support of the Kings of England, France, and Denmark.

Providence again interposed to rescue the oppressed. It was not long before the Emperor perceived that it was essential to his political interests, rather to retrace his hasty steps than by pressing on in his persecuting career to involve Germany in a civil war. He found that his peace with France and his friendship with the Pope were both precarious, and that the Turkish army was advancing upon Austria with recruited forces. The malcontent princes were therefore to be conciliated and not coerced, and it was stipulated at Nuremberg, and finally agreed upon at the Diet of Ratisbon, in August, 1532, that upon condition of their rendering the requisite assistance in the war with the Turks, the Emperor would suspend all legal processes against the Protestants on account of religion, use his utmost endeavors to procure the appointment of a general council within six months, to meet within twelve; and that no person should at present, be molested for his religion.

At this juncture the Elector John was removed from his useful labors, and exalted station, by an apoplexy. The event occurred on the sixteenth of August, 1532, and though Melancthon and Luther were immediately sent for, they only arrived in time to see him expire. The former delivered a Latin oration at his funeral, in which he thus admirably portrays the character of his prince.

"I shall not speak of his noble birth, for which indeed the Dukes of Saxony are sufficiently distinguished, nor of his youthful pursuits, though he might be highly eulogized for modesty and temperance; but confine myself principally to the delineation of his character during the period of his public life since the decease of his illustrious brother Frederic. Amidst a thousand difficulties, the genuine piety of the Elector John, his firmness, moderation, peaceful intentions, and every other virtue which can constitute a good prince, were conspicuous. It is a glorious trophy characteristic of his reign, and demanding our gratitude, that in a most turbulent period, these realms by the interposing mercy of Providence have been preserved in tranquillity, though many endeavored to stir up war. The preservation of peace was doubtless also a duty incumbent upon a prince so favored of heaven, and his authority, moderation, and zeal, eminently conduced to it, by frequently and forcibly disappointing the designs of ambitious men. It is easy to judge of the extent of the benefit derived from these exertions, when it is recollected that the cause in which he was engaged did not respect a single province or state only, but the whole of Germany. If war had been once kindled it would have raged throughout the empire, so that by preserving domestic peace he was instrumental in securing the tranquillity of many other states. Nor were his enemies alone restrained by his authority and moderate counsels, but his violent confederates were checked by perpetual efforts on his part, which it would not be improper on this occasion to particularize. We have seen them taking up arms, and in a situation to command victory, yet induced by the prince's justice, though contrary to their inclinations, to adjust their respective claims without bloodshed, in which he displayed an extraordinary heroism. When he could have gained the most decisive advantages over his most inveterate enemies who were at the very moment plotting his ruin, he spared them. How often has he shown a mind impregnable to sentiments of private cupidity, for after composing strife he never cherished the spirit of revenge, but was satisfied with maintaining public quiet. This, this is truly worthy of a great and wise man, to conquer anger and to prefer the welfare of his country to the gratification of his private feelings. It must indeed be acknowledged that war is sometimes necessary, the enemy must be opposed, and states must be roused to hostile preparations; but it is no less so that the turbulent emotions of the mind should be repressed and restored to reason, and that contention should be prevented by mild and judicious counsels.

"What shall I say of his domestic administration, which was replete with clemency and humanity? Homer represents Ulysses as ruling the Ithacans like a good father, and Xenophon, who proposes Cyrus as a perfect pattern for a prince, says that a good prince resembles a good father: and who ever had it in his power to say any thing worse of our departed prince, who was incapable of acting with cruelty or pride? To me he appeared to cherish the most paternal feelings for all his subjects, and I have often noticed the most striking indications of it both in private discourse and in public transactions.

"His private life was most unostentatious, free from all disgraceful excess and dissipation, and all the leisure hours he could command at intervals of business were devoted to sacred literature and especially to the study of the Christian religion. To this he gave his principal attention in the latter period of his life, and as I know from indubitable authority he abounded in the exercises of devotion. No one is ignorant of the dangers he incurred through his attachment to evangelical truth; and God eminently honored his exalted virtue, by protecting him through so many years, and liberating him from so many dangers, as he did Hezekiah when blockaded by the Assyrian army in Jerusalem. Now in a period of public tranquillity he is taken away, but happily not unprepared for the change, from miseries which may yet await us and from the agonies of a painful disorder. We may be permitted to grieve for the loss of a prince endowed with such various excellencies, so studious of general peace, and so devotedly kind to his people that he may be denominated their *father* as well as their *prince*.

"In what dangers and misfortunes the state may hereafter be involved I will not pretend to predict, but most humbly implore the supreme Jehovah, while our departed Elector rests in peace, to look upon the family of his subjects, to bestow his mercies on his son and successor, that he may prove our protector amidst impending dangers, and give peace to the state for the advancement of his truth and the glory of Jesus Christ. We acknowledge that God is the only sufficient preserver of the state—to him we fly, from him we implore assistance who has promised to hear the supplications of the afflicted.

"Let me exhort all present earnestly to unite in this prayer to God, to bless the prince under whose protection we are now placed, that he may preserve the peace of the church, maintain the doctrines of the gospel, and promote every description of useful learning."

Some tributary lines by Melancthon further honor the memory of a name, brighter and more durable than the brass on which it is recorded.

Tu quoque, Saxonice, Joannes, inclyte Princeps
Non virtute minor cognite fratre tuo:
Eximia Christum pietate fideque colebas
Vita piæ mentis testis eratque tuæ.
Vindelicis coram tua Cæsare nuper in oris
Asseruit Christi lingua professa fidem.
Notior ut fieret divini gloria verbi
Temporibus fulsit quæ rediviva tuis.
Utque Evangelii studium deponere velles
Flectere non ullæ te potuere minæ.
Ista tui incendit constantia pectoris hostes
Attulit et passim multa pericla tibi
Sed te difficili protexit tempore Christus
Et gratam pacem pro pietate dedit.
Ac tua sæpe tamen moderatio profuit ingens
Impia ne quisquam sumeret arma manu;
Hac longe superas aliorum laude triumphos
Hæc virtus magno Principe digna fuit.
Ergo tuum a nullo nomen delebitur ævo
Nec meriti laus est interitura tui.
Hic tua dum Christus meliori corpora sorte
Restituet justis, molliter ossa cubent.
Spiritus at vivat, cælique fruatur honore
Interea Christi conditus in gremio.

Virtuous as Frederic, thou illustrious John!
Our weeping hearts reluctantly resign'd;
Whose faith and love to Christ conspicuous shone,
Whose every action mark'd a pious mind.

Thou didst the faith of Christ with zeal maintain,
Nor dread imperial dictates and decrees;
Through all our coasts the truth of heaven proclaim,
Whose glory brightens even times like these.

No threats could move thee and no fears alarm,
Though foes and dangers closely round thee press'd;
Christ for thy zeal protected thee from harm,
And with tranquillity thy country bless'd.

Thy moderation check'd enkindling strife,
A triumph—and the noblest man can gain!
A praise, surpassing far the hero's life,
And worthy such a prince, so born to reign!

In Time's vast record, a distinguish'd page
Thou shalt, illustrious John! for ever grace;
Thy name shall live through every future age,
Nor change nor death th' eternal lines erase.

Here in soft slumbers shall thy *ashes* lie,
Till Christ returns his matchless power to prove;
While thy immortal *spirit* mounts the sky
T' enjoy the heaven of her Redeemer's love.

It may be regarded as a favorable circumstance in the history of the Reformation, that the venerable Elector now deceased, was succeeded by his son John Frederic, who was zealously attached to the Protestant cause, and exerted all the energy of his mind and the vigor of his youth to promote it.

After the retreat of the Turkish army, to which it had been compelled by the menacing appearance of the Imperial forces, Charles hastened to Italy, for the purpose of procuring a personal interview with the Pope to press the appointment of a general council. The latter, urged by an importunity which he could not resist, adopted the plausible measure of deputing his Nuncio, Hugo Rangonus, bishop of Reggio, to accompany the Emperor's ambassador to the new Elector of Saxony, as head of the Protestants, to confer on the subject of a council which he proposed should be convened at Mantua, Bologna, or Placentia. The Elector immediately summoned his principal divines. Melancthon delivered it as his decided conviction "that the Roman Pontiff was practising a piece of dissimulation to cajole them into conditions to which they must not submit—that he made extraordinary concessions to induce them to agree to the decisions of a general convention of his own arrangement, to which for his part he could not agree, because it ought to be a free assembly in which opinions on both sides might be discussed fairly and without restraint—that a deceptive purpose was obvious, and it would be preposterous to consent to a council before they knew what forms of proceeding were to be adopted, or who were to be implicated in its decrees—that the Emperor *could* not, and the Pope *would* not actually convene it." In this they all concurred, intimating to the Nuncio, that as the controversy had arisen and was principally conducted in Germany, there the council ought to be assembled. Nothing was effected by this negociation, excepting the Roman Pontiff's purpose of creating delay.

Although Zuinglius and Oecolampadius were now dead, the Sacramental controversy did not expire: unquestionably the conciliating spirit of Melancthon, so happily attempering his conscientious integrity, would have reconciled contending parties, had not Luther persisted in the most unwarrantable violence, which is the more to be deplored as he was obviously mistaken. In the latter end of the year 1534, Melancthon was commissioned to go and confer upon the subject with Bucer at Cassel, in the presence of the Landgrave. Bucer, who acted in the name of the ministers of upper Germany, and who exerted himself with indefatigable zeal to effect an union between the Lutherans and Zuinglians, proposed as the basis of an agreement, that "we receive truly and substantially the body and blood of Jesus Christ when we receive the sacrament—that the bread and wine are exhibiting signs, and by receiving them the body and blood of Jesus Christ are given to us and received by us—that the bread and body of Jesus Christ are united, not by a mixture of substance, but as being given with the sacrament." On the report of this statement to Luther, his hostility was somewhat abated though not eradicated, which was the only ascertainable advantage that resulted from the interview.

An attempt was made during the same year by Ferdinand, Duke George, and the Elector of Saxony, to allay religious animosities, and to promote concord. The meeting of persons appointed on each side to confer, took place at Leipsic. Vehus, and Christopher Turcus, his chancellor, were the deputies of Ferdinand; Julius Phlug and George Carlovitch, appeared on the part of Duke George; the disinterested piety, indefatigable perseverance

and excellent spirit of Melancthon, naturally induced the Elector to associate him with Pontanus in this new labor. An account of the conference is still extant in the German language. It is written by Melancthon, and distinguished by the total absence of all asperity, and the clear undisguised statement of every transaction. It appears that the attempt to unite was in vain—the papists adhered to their opinions, and the Saxon deputies would not relinquish truth. Vehus presented a form of concord, but it distinctly mentioned the errors which were most objectionable to the Protestants, especially the doctrine of the meritorious power of the mass to obtain the remission of sins. Nothing is more illustrative of the true character of Melancthon than these transactions. He was willing to approximate as far as possible, by conceding every point of difference which did not regard what he deemed essential truth; but then he became inflexible. Possessed of the most benignant temper, he was formed to pacify the world, and inherited the blessedness of the peace-maker. Matthew v. 9. Presenting to our view a rare combination of excellencies, a singular and pleasing union of the *Christian* and the *hero*, we behold him firm but not violent, modest but not servile, conscientious but not punctilious.

Wherever Lutheranism was known, or literature admired, the name of Philip Melancthon was familiar. Francis I. earnestly entreated him to repair to France. Maimbourg relates, that Margaret queen of Navarre and sister to the king, united with other illustrious females attached to the court, who cherished sentiments favorable to the reformation, in requesting that he might be sent for to be consulted on the existing religious contentions. The queen frequently spoke of him to her brother as a man of exalted piety, profound learning, and singular eloquence. Francis, whose active zeal for the revival of literature in France, had acquired him the title of the Father of Letters, listened with pleasure to these representations, and immediately adopted measures to procure a visit. Voræus Fossa was despatched with a letter from the king, and a command to urge him in his name to repair to his court. The letter is preserved.

"Francis, *by the grace of God King of France, to our beloved Philip Melancthon, greeting:*

"By means of William Bellaius Langey, our chamberlain and counsellor, to whom the management of ecclesiastical affairs is principally confided, I have for some time known it to be your peculiar study to appease the present disputes in religion; and now I find both from your letters to him, and from the report of Barnabas Voræus Fossa, who is just returned, that this is a very gratifying labor to you. I wish you to come the very first opportunity, and fully confer with some of our most eminent doctors on the reconciliation of opinions, and on other things susceptible of improvement in the government of the church, for which I feel the greatest solicitude and anxiety. However, I will send Voræus Fossa to you immediately with these letters for a safe conduct, imploring you not to be dissuaded by any one from this pious and holy undertaking. Your visit will be most grateful to me, and you are at perfect liberty to come either in a private or public character, and be assured you will find me, as indeed I always have been, most desirous of promoting your glory, reputation, and comfort, both at home and abroad.

"*From the town of* Guise, *the twenty-eighth day of June, one thousand five hundred and thirty-five.*"

MELANCTHON'S REPLY.

"*Most Christian and most Potent King!*

"Although the far-famed kingdom of France greatly surpasses every other in the known world in many other honorable distinctions, this may be noticed with peculiar approbation that it has always excelled the rest of the nations in purity of doctrine and perpetual zeal in defence of the Christian religion. It has therefore deservedly obtained the appellation of most happy and most *Christian*, a title the most glorious, the most magnificent, that can be conferred. I congratulate your majesty that at this juncture you have undertaken the care of preserving the church, not by the application of violent remedies, but by rational means, worthy the name of the *Most Christian King;* and that in the midst of the present dissensions you have so studied to moderate the violence of opposing parties, that the genuine unadulterated doctrines of Christianity, the glory of Christ, the true dignity of the ecclesiastical constitution, and the tranquillity of the state may be promoted. Nothing can be imagined more becoming a king than this disposition of mind and these proceedings. I beseech your majesty to persevere in this care and concern for your kingdom: for although public dissension has in some instances furnished occasion of mischief to violent and evil-minded ecclesiastics, yet good men have brought forward in the church many things which are essentially conducive to its welfare. Although therefore a mischievous disposition of mind ought to be restrained, yet I entreat your majesty not to be influenced by the bitter sentiments or writings of the calumnious, to suffer good and useful regulations to be abandoned in the churches. For my own part I have never been pleased with those intemperate counsels which have degraded the best and most holy order of the church, and which ought ever to be held in peculiar veneration: and I am well persuaded that all good men in your nation, who value the truth as I do, cherish this feeling. When I received your royal invitation, God is my witness how much I labored immediately to comply with it; for nothing would gratify me so much as to be of some service to the church according to my feeble capacity, and I indulge the most pleasing anticipations, from my knowledge of the piety, the moderation, and the constant aim to promote the glory of Christ displayed by your majesty. Voræus can detail the numerous difficulties which have delayed my visit, and which, though they should prevent this journey, cannot detach my mind from a steady purpose of checking by my advice and exertions the existing controversies. Voræus, however, will fully state my views.

"Finally, I commit myself to your royal favor, promising constantly to contribute my judgment with that of the pious and learned men of the church for the general good. May Christ preserve your majesty in prosperity and safety, that your government may promote the general happiness of the world and the glory of God.

Your majesty's
Most devoted servant,
Philip Melancthon.

"*From Saxony, the fifth day of September, one thousand five hundred and thirty-five.*"

In addition to these very curious documents, a further illustration of the dispositions prevalent at this period in the French court, at least amongst some of its most enlightened ornaments, is afforded by a letter addressed to Melancthon, by Cardinal Bellaius, dated the twenty-seventh of June. After applauding the benevolent wishes, which he knew from Voræus that he entertained for the general cause of Christianity, the Cardinal proceeds, "I

desire nothing more ardently than that the dissensions which have so long agitated the Christian church, may be appeased. Apply the utmost of your power, my dear Melancthon, by the help of God, to promote this general pacification, and you will have the concurrent approbation of all good men, especially of Francis, who, while possessing the supreme authority, is not only the *Most Christian King* in *name* and *title*, but in *truth*, as I have long had occasion to witness. I hope every thing from your meeting, and the matured advice you will give." The warm attachment of the Cardinal may be imagined from his subscribing himself, "Yours, *from my very heart*, Bellaius."

In another letter, written by William Langey, and dated the sixteenth of July, Melancthon is urged by a variety of arguments to visit France. "I have explained," says he, "to my friends who are interested in the common cause, all circumstances, and have given them your letters and those of Bucer, to peruse. I feel myself somewhat implicated in this affair, and should be sorry for any thing to occur dishonorable to you, or injurious to the cause of truth and the glory of Christ. The Cardinal Langey was shown the letters you have received from me previous to their being sent, lest any thing should have been written which he might disapprove or deem contrary to the views of the king." He afterwards alludes to the controversy respecting the place of holding the proposed council, represents the good inclinations of the king, and alludes to a private consultation with Melancthon upon the best and safest means of reforming the state of ecclesiastical affairs. Langey apologizes for the severities which had been inflicted upon some persons for their religious opinions, alleging, what however is not very admissible, that they were only a set of enthusiasts of notorious character, whom Melancthon himself would have been inclined to punish. After urging various other considerations to induce his compliance with the king's request, who, he says, was not only prepossessed in his favor, but naturally acute, prudent and willing to listen to sound argument; he concludes thus, "I exhort you, I conjure you for Christ's sake not to neglect the present occasion of accomplishing a business of all others the most glorious in which mortals can be engaged."

The *Sorbonne divines* probably would not very readily have united in these pressing solicitations, for how could they forget or forgive the satirical pen of Melancthon? And there is reason to suspect that a temporizing policy more than a spirit of sincere inquiry after truth dictated their prince's invitation. Francis had seized the opportunity afforded him by the full employment of the emperor's confederate forces against the Turks, to renew his claims in Italy, and used every effort to excite in the different princes of Europe, a jealousy of his rival's power. But his measures were disconcerted, and from the operation of different causes, he was generally unsuccessful. The invitation he received from the associated Protestant princes at Smalcald, was therefore at this crisis peculiarly welcome, and he was naturally led to use every endeavor to promote his own views by securing their confidence. For this purpose he negotiated and flattered, accommodating himself to their religious prejudices, affecting a wonderful moderation and even a spirit of pious inquiry in matters of controversy. A very curious affair had been transacted at Paris, to which the preceding letter of Langey refers. Some of the Parisians, who had imbibed the principles of Protestantism, posted up hand bills in several of the public places, and on the gates of the Louvre, containing reflections on the doctrines, rites and clergy of the church of Rome. The king being highly incensed at these proceedings, issued a general order against heretics; and appointed a solemn procession. The Holy Ghost was carried through the city, the king walked with his feet bare and his head uncovered, attended by the queen, the princes of the blood, and all his courtiers. Six Lutherans were publicly condemned by the parliament, to be burnt, a decree which was executed with the most shocking barbarity before the procession was finished; and others were sought after with the most eager diligence.

For the purpose of explaining these circumstances and securing the Protestant alliance, Bellay was sent to the German princes. He was instructed to assure them "that the persons proscribed and punished, were guilty of seditious practices, that the king wished for an accommodation on the subject of religion, by a meeting of the Parisian and German divines, and that he was particularly desirous of a visit from Philip Melancthon." Cardinal Tournon, however, remonstrated violently against this invitation given to a *heretic*, and the princes of Germany soon saw reason to question the sincerity of Francis. In fact, it is difficult to reconcile his inconsistencies. He protected or persecuted the Reformers as interest or policy dictated. He allowed the duke of Orleans, his second son, to offer the free exercise of their religion to the Protestants in the dukedom of Luxemburg, and his sister, the queen of Navarre, to promote the reformed cause in her country of Bearn. He courted the Reformers, yet opposed the Reformation—panegyrized them at Smalcald, yet persecuted them at Paris—almost a Lutheran in Germany, and quite a Catholic in France. Francis even permitted Bellay to explain his sentiments to the German princes, on some of the most important subjects of difference, in terms not very dissimilar to those used by the Protestants.

Some of Melancthon's friends urged him to accept the king of France's invitation, believing that it might prove a most favorable occasion for promoting the reformed religion in that country, and for checking the progress of the Catholic persecutions: but others were apprehensive that his visit would be attended with considerable personal danger, and advised him to remain in Saxony. Melancthon himself was by no means indisposed to comply with the king's request, supposing that his presence in France was not unlikely to be attended with some advantage to the Reformation. Luther, for similar reasons, was very urgent with the Elector to allow his friend to go, and alleged that the very expectation of seeing Melancthon, had already put a stop to the persecutions in France.

The Elector could not, however, be prevailed upon to give his consent. He felt apprehensive of offending the Emperor, and conceived no hopes of promoting any real good to the Reformation by such a permission. Policy of course, dictated a different excuse to Francis, to whom he wrote in a courteous manner, assuring him of his inclination to gratify his wishes, but pleading "the peculiar and distressing aspect of the times, and the unpleasant reflections he should be likely to incur. The Wittemberg academicians, he said, being dispersed by a pestilential disorder and obliged to retire to Jena, he could not possibly at present part with Melancthon. If, however, his services should hereafter be deemed necessary, and the pressure of present difficulties be somewhat alleviated, he would send a more decisive answer to his Majesty and give him permission to visit France. In the mean time he offered his most ready services in promoting the gospel of Christ, together with the temporal and eternal welfare of the king, his government, and the churches of France."

Melancthon was extremely chagrined at the Elector's interdiction, and it may be justly regretted; for who can doubt that his amiable deportment, elegant taste, nice discrimination, and exemplary candor, might have produced a very favorable impression upon a prince, who if he were after all a religious bigot, was much addicted to literature, and might have been moderated, if not changed by mildness? The Langean family would have been gratified and confirmed in their good inclinations—the queen of Navarre would have hailed his visit, and a thousand secret machines might have been set in motion by his influence. But he was obliged to content himself with sending a small treatise into France, containing his opinion and advice on the best means of settling religious controversies, and which though never published is inserted in the collections of Pezelius.

Early in the spring of this year, Doctor Robert Barnes was sent by Henry VIII., king of England, to consult with the Saxon theologians, on the subject of the intended divorce of his queen. Upon his arrival, most of the professors and scholars were removed in consequence of the plague which raged in Wittemberg, to Jena, in Thuringia. Luther, Jonas, Cruciger, and Melancthon, gave him recommendatory letters to the Elector. He brought letters of invitation to Melancthon who was urged by the king to pay a visit to England. Henry offered him ample security from all molestation, and even hostages if he required it. Luther was extremely anxious that he should be allowed to go, for "who knows," says he, "what God may intend to accomplish, his wisdom is greater than ours, and his will superior." He wished Melancthon's feelings to be consulted, who was deeply disappointed at the Elector's previous refusal of his invitation to France. In his first letter to the king, written in March, he compliments Henry in a very elegant style upon his literary inclinations, and after deploring the wretched state of letters in Germany, through the intemperate violence of religious controversy, he implores him to use every effort to promote them, and to take the persecuted muses under his protection.

By means of Alexander Aless, a Scotchman, who went into England, Melancthon took the opportunity of presenting a copy of his *Commentary on the Romans* to the king, who, with a munificence worthy of a distinguished sovereign, immediately presented him with two hundred crowns, and wrote him a letter in which he expresses his high approbation of his extraordinary zeal in defending the Christian religion, and his disposition to assist and promote his good intentions by every means in his power. To this communication, Melancthon returned an answer in the following month of December. He compliments the king upon his professed attachment to religious truth, and assures him that these sentiments had afforded himself and others, to whom he had read his letters the greatest satisfaction. In addition to Dr. Barnes' commission, Haynes and Mount had been despatched secretly to Sir John Wallop, ambassador in Paris, for the purpose of dissuading Melancthon from continuing in France, if he had undertaken the journey, and to allure him to England. Sir John Wallop was soon able to alleviate the anxiety of the king of England, by assuring him, in a despatch dated the seventeenth of August, that there was reason to believe Melancthon would not visit France. Henry, however, hastened Mount to him into Germany, with the view of superseding the French ambassador's application. So solicitous were two of the most distinguished monarchs of Europe to cultivate the friendship and to obtain the advice of Philip Melancthon.

The original documents are not a little curious, and shall be quoted for the amusement of the reader.

"*Master Secretary*, after our most hearty commendations, ye shal understand that having received the letters sent unto you from Sir John Wallop, and shewed the same unto the king's majesty, his plesure thereupon was, that we should dispatch these our letters incontinentely unto you concerning the accomplishment and doing of these things ensueing.

"First, his Grace's plesure is, that you shal immediately upon the receit hereof dispatch *Barnes* in post with *Deryk* in his company into Germany, commanding him to use such diligence in his journey, that he may and it be possible, meet with *Melancthon* before his arrival in France. And in case he shal so meet with him, not only dissuade his going thither; declaring how extremely the French king doth persecute those that wil not grant unto the bishop of Romes usurped power and jurisdiction; using in this part al persuasions, reasons and means that he can devise to impeach and let his said journey thither; saying unto him how much it should be to his shame and reproach to vary and go now from that true opinion wherein he hath so long continued: But also on the other side to persuade him also that he may (be willing) to convert his said journey hither; shewing him as wel the conformity of his opinion and doctrine here, as the nobility and vertues of the king's majesty, with the good entertainment which undoubtedly he shal have here at his Grace's hands.

"And if percase the said Barnes shal not meet with him before his arrival in France, then the said Barnes, proceeding himself further in his journey toward the princes of Germany shal with al diligence return in post to the K. H. the said Diryk, of the certainty of the said Melancthon's coming into France and such other occurrents as he shal then know. And if the said Diryk be not now ready to go with him, the king's plesure is ye shal in his sted appoint and send such one other with the said Barnes as ye shal think meet for that purpose.

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"Furthermore, the king's plesure is yee shal upon the receit hereof immediately cause Mr. Haines and Christopher Mount, in post to repair into France, to Sir John Wallop in as secret a manner as they can, and coming like his friends to visit him and not as sent by the king. And in case they shal by him or otherwise learn and know, that Melancthon is there arrived, then his Grace wol, that the said Haines and Mount, shal, in such sort, as they be not much noted, resort unto him and for the dissuading of his continuance there, or the alteration of his opinion and the alluring of him hither; to use such reasons and persuasions as be before written, with such other as they can further devise for that purpose. To the which Haines and Mount, the king's plesure is, ye shal deliver like copies of the same Dean's book, (Richard Sampson Dean of the Chapel,) and the Bishops sermons to be shewed unto the said Melancthon, or otherwise used, as may be most expedient for the achyevement of the king's purpose in that behalf.

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"And to make an end, his Grace wol in no wise that Barnes and Haynes shal tary for any further instruction of the bishop of Canterbury or any other. Having his Grace determined to send the same after by Mr. Almoner and Hethe; but that he Mr. Haynes and Mount shal with al possible diligence depart immediately in post without any lenger tarying than for this their depeche shal be necessary. So as their abode impeach not the king's purpose, touching the said Melancthon. And thus fare you

most heartily wel, from Langley, in much hast, this Monday at 4 of the clock at afternoon.

"Your loving friends,

"T. NORFOLK,
"GEO. ROCHFORD."

The next letter is from the secretary Cromwell, to John Wallop, the king's ambassador, in France, from which such parts only are extracted as illustrate the present subject.

"To my right loving frynd sir John Wallop, knyght, the kinges ambassadour, resident in the Corte of Fraunce.

"After my most harty recommendacions; these shal be to advertise you that the xviith day of this monthe I receyvid from you a packet of letters; which indelayedly I delyvered unto the Kinges Highnes and conferred with his Grace theffects both of your letters and al others within the sayd packet beying directed as wel to his H. as to me. And after his H. had with me perused the hoole contents thoroughly of your sayd letters; perceyvyng not only the likelihood of the not repayr into Fraunce of Philip Melancthon, but also your communications had with the Frenche Kinges Highnes upon your demaunde made of the Kynges Majesties pensions, with also your discrete answers and replications made in that behalfe, for the which his Majestie givethe unto you condigne thanks—

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"And touchyng Melancthon—consideryng there is no lykelihod of his repaire into Fraunce as I have wel perceyved by your letters, the K. H. therefore hath appoynted Christofer Mount indelayedly to take his journey where Melancthon is, and if he can to prevent Mounsr. de Langye in such wise as the sayd Melancthon his repaire into Fraunce may be stayed and diverted into England. Not doubting but the same shal take effect accordyngly. And as to Maister Haynes, the Kyng's plesure is that he shal go to Paris there to lerne and dissiphre the opynyons of the lerned men and their inclynations and affections as wel towards the K. H. procedyngs as to the Busshop of Rome his usurped power and aucthorite, after such sort as the Kyng's sayd Highnes hath now written unto hym by his Grace's letters addressed both unto hym and the sayd Christofer Mount: directyng theym what they shal do yn al thyngs commyttyd to theyr charge at this tyme; as I doubt not but they wil put thereto theyr devoires for the accomplishement of the Kynges plesure as apperteynethe .....

.....At *Thornebery* the xxiiith day of August.

"Your assuryd freend,

"THOMAS CRUMWELL."

A larger commission was afterwards sent by Henry VIII. to the Protestant princes of Germany, now assembled at Smalcald, consisting of Edward Fox, bishop of Hereford, Nicholas Hethe, archdeacon, and Dr. Barnes. The opinion which Melancthon formed of them, is thus expressed in a confidential letter to his friend Camerarius. "One only of our present guests Nicholas Hethe, the archdeacon, excels in amiableness of disposition and sound learning; as for the others they have no relish for our philosophy and mode of discourse, so that I shun their society as much as possible."

In the course of these conferences, Fox represented that the king had abrogated the Popish abuses and had abolished indulgences. He designated the Papal domination by the term Babylonian tyranny, and the Pope he called antichrist. A variety of articles were drawn up by Melancthon, and some dissertations, which the ambassadors brought on their return to England, on the marriage of priests on monastic vows, and on the mass. It is intimated in the conclusion, that the Protestants felt surprised at the English decree against abuses, when no amendment was proposed, and especially as there was a total omission of the more flagrant abuses of which they complained. In a copy of this decree of Henry VIII. still extant in the German archives, Melancthon has written in several places in the margin, *not at all sound.*

The great purpose, however, which Henry really had in view by these negociations, was to obtain ultimately the sanction of the Wittemberg divines to the divorce of his queen Catharine; but their opinion was unfavorable to his proceedings. They drew up a paper, disapproving of the divorce, which was transmitted by the ambassadors; and Melancthon fully concurred with Luther upon the subject.

In the same year, 1535, Melancthon's acquaintance with the celebrated archbishop Cranmer, commenced. It seems to have originated in the visit which Alexander Aless, who had been long and intimately acquainted with Melancthon in Germany, paid to England, in the month of August. Knowing the archbishop's generous disposition, Melancthon took the liberty of giving him a recommendatory letter as a learned foreigner, and availed himself of the opportunity of conveying a present to the archbishop of one of his own books. This was probably his Commentary on the Romans. Another copy was presented, as we have related, to the king. This Alexander Aless was the same person whom Cromwell took with him to the Convocation in the year 1536, for the purpose of delivering his opinion about the sacraments, of which he insisted only two, baptism and the Lord's supper, were of Christ's original appointment. He wrote also a useful treatise on the subject of *Schism*, with which the dissenters from the Catholic church were charged; but he was furnished with both matter and argument by Melancthon.

Aless originally fled with other learned men from Scotland, in consequence of the persecutions of 1534, and was received into Cromwell's family. Henry VIII. is said to have been considerably attached to him, and to have bestowed upon him the distinguishing epithet of *his scholar*. He was afterwards made a professor in the university of Leipsic.

The recommendatory letters of Melancthon, insured his Scotch protegee a most hospitable reception at the palace of Lambeth, and the archbishop could not but feel honored by the sincere praises of his learned and pious correspondent who sought his friendship, and who in his letter said, "if the church had but some more such bishops, it would be no difficult matter to have it healed and the world restored to peace."

Several circumstances concurred at this period to excite the hypochondriacal depression of mind which so much embittered some of the years of Melancthon's life. He had a narrow escape from lightning, which produced considerable damage in his immediate neighborhood, and he suffered severely in his back from a fall, but happily it occasioned no permanent injury. The removal of the academy to Jena, in consequence of a raging infectious disorder, alluded to in the Elector's letter cited above, exceedingly discomposed and inconvenienced him—but the students and professors, returned in the beginning of the year 1536, to Wittemberg.

The state of his health required an excursion amongst his friends. He was accompanied by Jacob Milichius, a physician to whom he was particularly attached on account of his professional skill, devoted friendship, and literary taste. He was a native of Friburg, and for a series of years led a

useful and eminent course of public life at Wittemberg. At the age of fifty-nine he died, much and generally lamented. Camerarius alludes with evident pleasure to the few days passed in the companionable society of Melancthon at Tubingen, and notices the useful advice he gave respecting the management of the University, and the general regulation both of religious and literary concerns. A violent contention had arisen on the subject of giving letters of recommendation and conferring honorary titles upon the students. Many learned men were applied to for their opinion; among the rest Melancthon, who sent in a written statement of his views, and the reasons which influenced his decision. He conceived that they had been advantageous, especially as such testimonies, publicly and solemnly bestowed upon meritorious students, tended to secure the avenues to clerical office against the intrusion of ignorance and incapacity.

He addressed a long letter to Brentius on the subject of the academy at Tubingen, which is dated from the palace of the Duke of Wirtemburg. It is not to be wondered at that he felt a peculiar interest in this early scene of his studies and labors. He mentions his satisfaction in some of the professors, but intimates the *great deficiency* that existed in the Theological departments, and urges his correspondent, by desire of the Duke, to spend one year at Tubingen, till some *suitable person* could be procured to occupy that important situation. He deplores the general state of literature throughout the whole of Upper Germany, and expresses great anxiety to ameliorate the state of the academy.

He was doomed to incur in consequence of this journey what he so often experienced, the attacks of malevolence. A variety of vexatious reports were put in circulation, and instantly credited by the weak and the wicked propagators of mischief. Some asserted that he had separated from the Reformers and quarrelled with Luther, to whom his philosophical notions were disagreeable—that he would not return to Wittemberg, or if he did, no further cordiality was likely to subsist between them. The sowers of dissension however were disappointed of the produce they anxiously expected. His methods of conveying instruction, and especially his uniform and zealous efforts to purify the logic of the schools, and terminate the endless disputations of former times by introducing juster principles of reasoning, were exceedingly grateful, instead of being, as his adversaries calumniously misrepresented, disgusting to Martin Luther. That eminent Reformer always sought his advice, and with his characteristic ingenuousness acknowledged his superiority.

An anecdote which is related of them is confirmatory of this statement. Luther was writing the following words, "Res et verba Philippus; verba sine rebus Erasmus; res sine verbis Lutherus; nec res, nec verba Carolostadius. *Philip Melancthon is both substance and words—Erasmus words without substance—Luther substance without words—Cariostadt neither substance nor words*"—when Melancthon came unexpectedly, and overlooking him said with a smile, "As to Erasmus and Carlostadt it is well judged and censured, but too much is attributed to me, and good words as well as matter ought to be ascribed to Luther, for he speaks exceedingly well."

Among the variety of other important labors, Melancthon was very much occupied at this time with the furious zealots who had created so much disturbance in Germany under the name of Anabaptists. During the temporary removal of the academy to Jena, he and Cruciger were indefatigable in their efforts to reclaim them, and it must be owned were in some degree successful. Melancthon wrote an excellent treatise against them in the German language.

Soon after his return from Jena, he was engaged in a conference with Bucer and Capito on the sacramental controversy. Pursuing with unabated ardor the great purpose of a general re-union among the Reformers, Bucer and Capito had repaired, in the month of January, to an assembly of the ministers and magistrates of the Reformed cantons of Switzerland, at Basil. They urged a union with the Lutherans, which they deemed more than ever probable from their decreased animosity. A meeting was afterwards convened in May at Eisenach, to which the Swiss divines sent their confession of faith; but as Luther could not personally attend, Bucer and Capito proceeded to Wittemberg, where, after several conferences with him and his associates, Melancthon was appointed to draw up a formula on the sacrament, which, it is remarkable, the inflexible Lutherans, the moderate Reformers, and the whole Synod composed of the ministers of Upper Germany, concurred in signing. Thus the purpose of unanimity was obtained to a very considerable extent, and was celebrated on the occasion with great mutual congratulations; though it may be questioned, from a perusal of this document, whether Bucer and his moderating associate did not manifest too much of a servile and temporizing flexibility.

CHAPTER X.

A General Council proposed—Meeting at Smalcald—Melcanthon writes on the Pope's Supremacy, and against the manner of appointing the Council—Communications with Francis I.—Passage from the Recess of Smalcald—Melancthon is solicited to visit Augsburg respecting the institution of a Public Library—Letter of Cardinal Sadolet—A second Commission from Henry VIII.—Persons sent into England—Melancthon's letters to the king—Second letter against the Anabaptists—Another deputation from Frankfort—Melancthon's third and fourth letters to the king—Death of George of Saxony—Progress of the Reformation—Diet held at Haguenaw—Melancthon's dangerous illness on the way—Interesting account of Luther's visit to him—Another Diet at Worms—Referred to Ratisbon—Melancthon meets with an accident on the road—Conference between select persons—Augsburg Decree confirmed—Several anecdotes of Melancthon—Contentions about the election of a Bishop at Naumburg—Account of Melancthon and Bucer's co-operation with the Archbishop of Cologne, to introduce the Reformation into his Diocese—Acrimonious publication of some of the clergy—Melancthon's satirical reply—Private afflictions—Draws up a plan of Reform for the Elector Palatine—Engages in the ordination of George Prince of Anhalt—Sketch of his Life—Epigrams by Melancthon. 1537 to 1545.

Paul III. who had succeeded to the Popedom in the year 1534, appeared more disposed than his predecessors to convene a general Council, and sent circular letters throughout the states under his jurisdiction, appointing a time and place, namely, the *twenty-seventh of May*, 1537, at *Mantua*. The confederate Protestant Princes re-assembled together at Smalcald, and in the February preceding the proposed Council, Vorstius, the Papal Nuncio, and Heldus, Vice Chancellor to the Emperor, came to announce it, and exhort them to attend. This occasioned long and close deliberations.

The Wittemberg theologians were summoned to the meeting at Smalcald, and as Luther was incapable of attending in consequence of a severe illness, the chief trouble, accompanied as usual with no inconsiderable odium, devolved upon Melancthon. They were required to make an accurate comparison of the different sentiments which prevailed among themselves, in order to terminate the existing disputes, and devise some common form of doctrine for the Protestant churches; then to determine upon those articles of faith which from their radical importance were to be retained and avowed at all hazards, in order finally to ascertain what might be conceded to the Catholics for the sake of restoring peace and harmony.

Whether from the flattering caresses of others, or from the deliberate judgment and accionate disposition of his own mind, Melancthon could not

be induced to renounce the hope of promoting concord, not only between those who were perpetually contending on the subject of the sacramental controversy, but between the Reformers and Catholics. With respect to the first question, relative to an examination of the points of difference which divided the Reformers themselves, he complains that a calm and impartial investigation could not be obtained, owing to the rigidity of some, and the apprehension of others, lest instead of promoting harmony, the discussion of these differences should inflame resentment. With respect to the second, he was deputed to compose an essay on the power and primacy of the Roman Pontiff, and on the jurisdiction of bishops. The performance proved of signal use, and was noticed with marked approbation in the Recess or Decree of the Convention. It exceedingly confirmed the minds of all, and removed the suspicions which his calumniators had excited even in the Elector himself, who did not sufficiently distinguish between a bias to Popery and that strong desire for peace which Melancthon labored to effect, and which he cherished the hope of obtaining without the sacrifice of principle. He thought it proper to contend only about essentials; here he was firm—in other respects he aimed with incessant, but useless toil, to produce reconciliation. In fact the standard of his piety was superior to that of the age in which he lived, and unlikely to be duly appreciated or sufficiently influential in the boisterous hour of religious innovation. The performance referred to was written with no less zeal against the excessive domination of Rome and her ecclesiastics than Luther himself would have displayed, though with milder words; and it affirmed that little or no hope could be entertained of the results of a Council so constituted as that to which the Pope had summoned the Princes of Christendom. Similar sentiments are expressed in the correspondence which was carried on between the confederate Princes and the king of France. In the preceding year Francis had written letters to the assembly, which intimated some offence. He perceived, he said, from the report of his ambassador, that they did not cherish exactly the sentiments he had expected, but he was disposed to overlook any contempt they had manifested, from his ardent desire to promote a general union in Christendom, especially between Germany and France; and he was desirous they should send a deputation to him. They replied in letters written in their name by Melancthon, who may perhaps not inaptly be termed *the pen of the Reformation*,—"That they certainly had intended no contempt, and fully concurred in his views respecting mutual union. They excused themselves from sending deputies as he desired, not feeling themselves warranted to do so; and with respect to a Council, if it were not free, but ordered by the Pope merely for the purpose of condemning them, it would confirm, instead of remove abuses, and inflame greater discord. They alleged the Bull itself, in which their sentiments were condemned already, as a proof that the Council would not be a free one." The King replied in a courteous manner, declaring that on this subject they were completely agreed.

It is due to the princes assembled at Smalcald to introduce the following passage from their Recess. "As it has hitherto been the case, and still is, that some who pretend to holy orders adhere to the popish doctrines and ceremonies, and cannot agree with our faith nor conform to our worship, whence monasteries and other ecclesiastical property have or will hereafter come into our hands, the reverend and spiritual Christian teachers, preachers, and pastors, have advised and requested us that some of this property should be devoted to the honor of God and the advantage of the Christian cause, as our pious will may direct; we therefore unanimously agree, that the parochial churches in our several districts and jurisdictions, shall be provided with learned, pious, and honorable teachers, preachers, and pastors; and that in their different situations they be maintained in a decent and respectable way with their wives and families. Also we appoint superintendents to watch over the said pastors and ministers, that they keep sound doctrine and live and walk as becometh Christians. And we order the provision of suitable funds for *schools of education*, adapted to the local circumstances of each district, that youth may be trained up therein in good morals and sound learning, so that our churches may not in future be unsupplied with suitable pastors and ministers. *We further order proper funds to be appropriated to the use of those who shall devote themselves principally to the study of the sacred Scriptures.* Moreover, we order the erection and endowment of *hospitals* for the reception of the poor of both sexes; and in fine, that every one in every place shall exert himself to cause such institutions to be erected, provided, and supported, wherever the necessity exists, and whatever else the duty of Christian princes and magistrates may require."

Melancthon was solicited by the senate of the city of Augsburg to pay them a visit, but many and weighty reasons induced him to decline their invitation. They were about establishing a public library, and even applied to the Elector to permit this visit; but he answered that he could not possibly spare him, both on account of the discussions upon the subject of a general council, and of the great resort of students to Wittemberg.

In fact, Melancthon could not command a moment's leisure, and in addition to his exertions in the public cause, he was incessantly pestered with the reproaches of the malevolent, who misinterpreted all his actions, and with the unjust censures of many with whom he was connected who disliked his conciliating spirit. It was reported that in consequence of considerable differences of opinion which occasioned some discussion at Smalcald, he was alienated from his own party, and several princes studiously endeavored to induce him to relinquish his existing engagements, and become a professor in their universities; but he never sought private emolument or honor to the neglect of public duty, and therefore could not be gained. But as his friend and biographer Camerarius remarks, no integrity or innocence of character can escape suspicion and slander. He could not even receive a letter from the learned Sadolet, because it came from *Italy*, without being exposed to suspicion and charged with the crime of being connected with Catholics. This letter is produced by Camerarius as a specimen of that elegant latinity for which the writer was distinguished; we may be allowed to translate it, as being no less honorable to the spirit and character of him who wrote than of him who received it.

"James Sadolet, *Cardinal of Carpentras, sends his most affectionate salutations to* Philip Melancthon.

"During my residence at Carpentras, where I had imagined myself fixed for life, but whence I am suddenly called to Rome by the mandate of the Pope, I was perpetually conversant with your writings, which I read both on account of the ability they discovered and the general elegance of the composition. Often in the midst of this pleasurable employment, I became gradually inflamed with affection, and cherished a great anxiety to commence a friendship with you. For although some

difference of opinion exists between us, this need not cause dissension among well educated men.

"At the moment I was deliberating about writing to you to open, so to speak, the doors of friendship, suddenly I was sent for to Rome, on account of an approaching council, and a consultation respecting various affairs, on which it would become necessary soon to deliberate. I had superintended my spiritual charge for the period of ten years, when thus summoned by the secret appointment of the best and wisest of pontiffs, to be invested, ignorant and unskilled as I was, with the dignified office of cardinal. This occasioned delay in transmitting as I wished, a letter to you: for it is impossible to express how many anxieties, cares, and troubles, the translation from my former peaceful and happy life into a tumultuous and bustling one, has occasioned me. This indeed was sure to happen, for my judgment avoided it and followed my former course of life. Both, however, fell out contrary to my original inclinations, so that I cannot rejoice in what I was unwilling to possess, and not be unaffected with grief in losing what I wished to enjoy. But thus appointed by the providence of God, I shall endeavor by his aid properly and fully to discharge this honorable office.

"As my mind begins to emerge from the crowd of difficulties which beset me, I have resolved no longer to defer writing, and thus give you a pledge, my dear Philip, of my affection and of your attraction. My esteem arises from your exemplary virtues, and may I not hope that you will equally reciprocate it from your native kindness? You will, I doubt not, accede to my request and eager desire of friendly intercourse. I am not one of those who instantly cherish a violent hatred because another differs in opinion, an arrogance and a vanity to which my nature is totally repugnant. I honor intellect, virtue, and literature, which, as you possess them in no common degree, excite a proportionate regard for you. I doubt not your sentiments are similar to my own: for a person so accomplished in elegant literature cannot be otherwise than kind and courteous, and I indulge the greatest confidence that my letters will not be unacceptable, because however disjoined by distance of place, we may be united in spirit and affection. The object of my greatest anxiety and desire therefore is, to persuade you to admit me into a principal share of that regard you feel for those, and I know they must be very numerous, who have been induced, from the celebrity of your name, to solicit your friendship. Nothing would afford me greater pleasure than to have an opportunity of expressing and proving my attachment to you, and if you will furnish me with any such occasion, I shall esteem it as a high obligation. I am ready with the greatest zeal to do whatever I know may be gratifying to you; no one shall exceed me. Attachment to you and the nature of my office, require a constant concern for literary men. Farewell, most learned Melancthon, and let me share your best affections.

"Rome, *July* 15, 1537."

The justice of Luther's remark upon the preceding letter may be left to the reader's own determination. "Sadolet," says he, "who had been the Pope's secretary fifteen years, a very witty and learned man, wrote in a most courteous manner to Philip Melancthon, but exceeding craftily, according to the Italian custom, in order that, through a *Cardinalate*, they might have bought him on their side, which was done by the Pope's directions; for the good gentleman, Mr. Pope, is much perplexed, not knowing how to fall upon us."

Application was again made from the court of Great Britain for a deputation of the Saxon divines and Reformers to take a journey, for the purpose of conferring with learned men of that kingdom about ecclesiastical and other important affairs. William Paget and Christopher Mount were employed on this mission. They were instructed to go through France, and act in concurrence with the king, and Gardiner, the English ambassador at the French court: but the main purpose of Henry VIII. was to induce the German princes to disregard both the Emperor and the Pope, and to refer all the points of difference to himself and the King of France. A visit from Melancthon in particular was exceedingly urged, but year after year slipt away, and other concerns occupying his attention, the journey was never accomplished.

A legation, however, was sent, consisting of Francis Burkhard of Burgart, vice-chancellor of the Elector of Saxony, George a Boneyburg, a nobleman, a doctor of laws, and Frederic Myconius, superintendent of Saxe-Gotha. The former was charged with a letter from Melancthon to the king, in which he expresses his affectionate friendship for the vice-chancellor, who would be able to explain his high regard for his majesty and his disposition to devote himself to the public good by the illustration of Christian truth. "Private men," says he, "very much need the aid of distinguished princes and states, and your majesty has excited the greatest hopes in every country that you would promote the wishes of the pious for the reformation of the churches. What else does the papal faction aim at than the total extinction of divine truth, and the infliction of the most barbarous cruelties upon kings, princes, and nations, and the support of the Catholic abuses by a system of boundless tyranny in the church? Such being the dangerous situation of her affairs, I will not cease to exhort and implore your majesty to pay attention to the circumstances of the Christian church, now a suppliant at your feet, to promote some firm and durable union, and to dissuade other princes from connecting themselves with popish counsels. This is an affair of the greatest importance, and therefore worthy the attention of a king so superior to others in learning and wisdom."

The ambassadors were received in the most courteous manner, and the King of England frequently expressed his anxious desire to see Melancthon. But nothing of any consequence was effected by this journey, and the commissioners were at length dismissed with strong protestations of royal friendship, and an invitation to return during the ensuing year. The king sent letters to the Elector of Saxony, full of the strongest professions of kindness to himself and the reformed cause, and expressive of the greatest anxiety to enjoy a visit from Melancthon, "from whose distinguished erudition and sound judgment all good men," says he, "form the highest expectations."

The princes having discovered by means of some intercepted letters a secret correspondence between the German and English Anabaptists, wrote a long and elegant epistle to Henry VIII. containing a statement of the pernicious doctrines these persons so eagerly disseminated, and warning him of the danger likely to result from their fanatical proceedings unless prevented by a bold and timely interference. This epistle was composed by Melancthon.

A Protestant conference was held at Frankfort in the beginning of the year 1539, to which place Melancthon accompanied his prince. Violent proceedings being apprehended, he was deputed to write a paper on the subject of lawful defence, which he executed with great care and success. From this assembly a deputation was sent into England, which carried another of his letters to Henry

VIII. for, being affected by the testimony of his friends respecting the royal benignity, and desirous of promoting in the king every good inclination, he thought it proper to cherish this correspondence. His letter, dated Frankfort, March 26, 1539, was calculated to produce a good effect. After expressing his grateful sense of his majesty's regard for him, which was manifested afresh in his discourses with the commissioners, he proceeds, "I commend the cause of the Christian religion to your majesty's attention, for your majesty knows that the most important duty of great princes is to regard and promote heavenly truth, on which account God associates them with himself in the office of ruling. I am desirous, as I have written before, that a union upon the basis of doctrinal agreement should be effected among those churches which reject the domination of Rome. This would tend to promote the glory of God and conduce to general tranquillity. Your majesty has happily begun the removal of some superstitious practices, I entreat you to proceed to others. The intention of our adversaries is apparent, but they can never suppress our doctrine; God himself will be the keeper of our states and princes. They are always most anxious for public peace and tranquillity, but if our enemies resort to arms, the princes will not be deficient in their duty. I frequently call to mind the inscription upon one of King Edward's coins, "*Jesus autem transiebat per medium eorum—Jesus passed through the midst of them*," by which that wise monarch doubtless intended to intimate that the governors of kingdoms are divinely protected whilst they defend righteous causes; and, indeed, that it is truly heroic to bear arms in defence of the church against tyrants. It is said that Ajax asked Achilles what were the greatest and most difficult of all labors? To which he replied, "those which are undertaken for friends." Ajax inquired again, "What then were the most pleasant and easy?" He answered, "the same." The hero intimated by this reply, that nothing could be more delightful than to perform even the severest duties for the public good, and that he could cheerfully sustain the heaviest cares for this purpose. Such was their greatness of mind, who were ignorant of the true God; how much more does it become Christian princes to endure labor and danger for the church of Christ, when they know that they are divinely appointed to this office, and are promised celestial rewards for their services. I will not cease therefore to exhort your majesty to persevere in promoting the cause of the Christian church, and in resisting the tyranny and violence of its adversaries."

Melancthon addressed letters also to Cromwell and Cranmer, and afterwards being denied a journey to England by the Elector, who acted with the concurrent advice of Luther, from an opinion that nothing could be done with the infatuated monarch; he again, at the instigation of the Landgrave of Hesse, wrote him a long epistle in a most magnanimous spirit, many parts of which merit quotation. "Many pious and learned men in Germany have indulged the hope that your majesty's authority would have produced a considerable alteration in the conduct of other kings, and that the German princes in particular might have been influenced to relinquish the unworthy cruelty of their proceedings and deliberate on the correction of abuses. You were hailed as the promoter and leader of this most holy and illustrious design. Now, alas! your prejudices have wounded our minds most deeply: the animosity of other princes is confirmed, the vexatious obstinacy of the impious is increased, and the ancient errors are strengthened. The bishops no doubt contend that they do not maintain errors, but true doctrines and a divine right; and though by no means ignorant that they are in fact opposed to the divine authority and the apostolical constitution of the church, yet men will find out very fine interpretations, *sopha pharmaka*, artful poisons, as Euripides calls them, when policy requires it, in order to furnish a specious pretext for their errors. Sophisms of this description may not be so much admired in England for their wisdom, but they are very much in repute at Rome, where the Cardinals Contaranus, Sadolet, and Pole, are applying a new paint and varnish to old abuses. In Germany these sophisms have depraved the minds of many persons of distinction, and I am not surprised that multitudes are deluded by such fallacies; and though you are neither deficient in erudition nor in judgment, yet even wise men are sometimes diverted from the truth by specious arguments.

"It cannot be denied that the church of Christ was for a long period veiled in tremendous darkness. Human traditions, the torment of pious minds, were most shamefully introduced to the utter corruption of divine worship. Vows, gifts, vestments, meats, and drinks, a vain repetition of prayers, indulgences, and the worship of images, with every species of manifest idolatry, being substituted for the true service of God, exhibiting a striking resemblance between the religion of heathens and of Rome. The real doctrines of repentance and forgiveness of sin through faith in Jesus Christ, justification by faith, the distinction of law and gospel, and the use of the sacraments were unknown. The keys of authority were given into the hands of the Pope to support his tyranny both in civil and ecclesiastical affairs. The law of celibacy produced licentiousness of manners, but God has in some measure dispersed the darkness by the reformed doctrine, for this light of truth which now shines in the churches must be attributed to him, because no human skill could have removed the prevailing errors. The Spirit of God has predicted that in the last times a violent contention would arise between the Saints and Antichrist, and that Antichrist, supported by bishops, deceivers and princes, would oppose the truth and slay the pious. These very things are at this moment transacted. The tyranny of the Romish hierarchy has partly introduced and partly confirmed the existing abuses, and as Daniel predicted, 'his look is more stout than his fellows.' Daniel vii. 20. We rejoiced in the separation of your majesty, and hoped that the English church would flourish again, but alas! your bishops still adhere to Antichrist in all his idolatries and errors. The articles they have published are most craftily selected, and support every human tradition, especially vows, celibacy, and confession. In retaining the doctrine of private masses, they not only confirm priestly domination, but every dangerous error of Popery, artfully avoiding improvement, that their dignity and wealth may be secure. That this is the work of the bishops, is obvious; it speaks for itself.

"I implore you by our Lord Jesus Christ to mitigate and amend this episcopal decree, by doing which you will both consult the glory of Christ and the welfare of all your churches. May you regard the ardent desires of the pious throughout the world, that kings would use their influence to effect a reformation of the church, to remove unauthorized services, and to propagate evangelical truth! May you consider those holy persons who are in bonds for the gospel and are the true members of Christ! for if this decree be not cancelled, the bishops will practice their severities to an incalculable extent. Satan himself can alone inspire this opposition to Christ; they minister to his rage; he impels them to these cruel massacres. All good men entreat and implore you not to listen to the impious, the

cruel sentiments, and sophistical cavils in circulation against us, but to regard our just and well-founded petition. In doing this, you will secure, no doubt, a great and a divine reward, as well as the highest degree of celebrity among all Christians. Jesus Christ himself will judge of the conduct of men to his church, and while human language exists, these transactions will be transmitted to all future ages. If our churches be indeed the churches of Christ, and we seek his glory, the cause will never want patrons and protectors, who will bestow due praises on the deserving, and merited contempt on the persecutor. Hungry, thirsty, naked, bound, Christ himself complains of the fury of the Romish hierarchy, and the iniquitous severities practised by many kings and princes: he entreats for the wounded members of his body, that his true church may be defended and the gospel honored:—to acknowledge, to entertain, to minister to HIM, is the duty of a pious king, and a most grateful service to God."

New cares and labors awaited Melancthon upon his return from Frankfort, but they were pleasurable ones. George, Duke of Saxony, sovereign of Misnia and Thuringia, the inveterate enemy of the Reformation, being dead, his brother Henry, who succeeded to his dominions, espoused it with the utmost zeal. Melancthon and Luther were immediately employed to regulate the affairs of the University at Leipsic, and to investigate the state of the churches. The Reformed cause now rapidly spread in every direction, and other princes, especially Joachim II. the Elector of Bradenburg and son-in-law to Sigismund, the King of Poland, embraced it. Raynald quotes some letters written by Cochlæus, in which he imputes the *blame*, as he calls it, of this change, to Melancthon and Vicelius; and Seckendorf has preserved a pleasing letter on the subject, composed by the former, addressed in the name of the Elector of Brandenburg to the Polish sovereign.

The Protestants having solicited the Emperor to appoint a general conference between them and the Catholics, in conformity with the resolutions which had been adopted for this purpose at Frankfort, he directed them previously to deliberate on the concessions they were prepared to make to their adversaries. They met at Smalcald in the year 1540, and replied by the pen of Melancthon, that they should adhere to their Confession at Augsburg and the subsequent Apology. Amidst a multiplicity of other public engagements, he found time also to write a long and admirable vindication of the Reformers, addressed in the name of the Elector of Saxony and the confederate princes, to Charles V.; and another piece against Sebastian Frank, Caspar Schwenckfeld and others, who maintained fanatical opinions, and pretended to extraordinary revelations.

The Diet, which the Emperor had appointed to be held at Spires, was in consequence of the plague removed to Haguenaw. On his way thither Melancthon became dangerously ill, his disorder arising chiefly from the morbid melancholy incident to his constitution. The immediate cause of his present extreme dejection of mind is to be traced to the misconduct of the Landgrave of Hesse, who was forming an illicit connection, which Melancthon foresaw would prove detrimental to the Reformation by furnishing an occasion of reproach to its virulent adversaries. Varillas and Bossuet are by no means backward to avail themselves of the circumstance. Being in consequence of this indisposition detained at Vinaria, he experienced the kindest attentions from the Elector and his friends, who immediately sent for George Sturciad, a physician of Erfurt to whom he was peculiarly attached. Luther also hastened to his friend; and his cheering presence contributed not a little to aid the powers of medicine in producing his convalescence. As he had previously felt a deep persuasion that he should die, he had written his will and deposited it with Cruciger; and on his way, while crossing the Elbe, he suddenly uttered what happily proved an unfounded prediction:

"Viximus in Synodis et jam moriemur in illis."

In councils we have lived, in councils now shall die.

The interesting account written by Solomon Glass and preserved amongst the original manuscripts of the German princes, shall be presented to the English reader. "When Luther arrived, he found Melancthon apparently dying. His eyes were dim, his understanding almost gone, his tongue faltering, his learning imperfect, his countenance fallen, incapable of distinguishing any one, and indisposed to all nourishment. At such a sight, Luther was in the most terrible consternation, and turning to those who had accompanied him in his journey, exclaimed, 'Alas, that the devil should have thus unstrung so fine an instrument!'—Then in a supplicating posture, he devoutly prayed, 'We implore thee, O Lord our God, we cast all our burdens on thee and WILL CRY TILL THOU HEAREST US, pleading all the promises which can be found in the Holy Scripture respecting thy hearing prayer, so that THOU MUST INDEED HEAR US to preserve at all future periods, our entire confidence in thine own promises.' After this he seized hold of Melancthon's hand, and well knowing the extreme anxiety of his mind and the troubled state of his conscience, said, 'Be of good courage, Philip, YOU SHALL NOT DIE: although God has always a sufficient reason for removing us hence, he willeth not the death of a sinner but rather that he should be converted and live,'—it is his delight to impart life, not to inflict death. God has received into his favor the greatest sinners that ever existed in the world, namely, Adam and Eve, much more will he not cast thee off, my dear Philip, or permit thee to perish in grief and guilt. Do not therefore give way to this miserable dejection and destroy thyself, but trust in the Lord, who can remove it and impart new life.' While he thus spake, Melancthon began visibly to revive, as though his spirit came again, and was shortly restored to his usual health."

After his recovery, Melancthon wrote thus to Camerarius, "I cannot express the pain I have suffered during my illness, some returns of which I often feel. I witnessed at that period the deep sympathy of Luther, but he restrained his anxieties that he might not increase mine, endeavoring to raise me from my desponding state of mind, not only by admitting kind consolation but salutary reproof. If he had not come to me I should certainly have died." To Burcardus Mythobius he wrote, "In the summer I received two letters from you, the one at Smalcald, the other in Thuringia, at a time when I was confined by extreme illness occasioned only by overwhelming anxiety of mind on account of some affairs relative to others, of which you also complain. I must have died, if Luther had not recalled me from the gates of death."

The Elector of Saxony and the Landgrave of Hesse not being present at Haguenaw, no conclusive measures were adopted, but another Diet was appointed to meet at Worms in October. Thither the Emperor dispatched his Commissioner, Nicholas Granville, and the Pope his Nuncio, Campegius, Bishop of Filtri: Vergerius also appeared in the name of the king of France. It was long before the preliminary arrangements could be adjusted. On the twenty-eighth of November, Melancthon thus addressed his friend Jerome Baumgartner.

"The church of God does not often engage the serious attention of Kings, Pontiffs, and Princes; for their minds are devoted to ambitious projects, and other occupations. Truth is more generally esteemed and the church upheld by private persons and families; it was not one of the kings of Phœnicia or Syria that cherished Elijah, but a poor widow, in whose house the true religion was maintained. Jonah is said to have been the son of a widow. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were not only private individuals, but exiles; and therefore I trust that God will still preserve his church amidst the present troubles. I exhort you to pursue your pious labors and cares with increased alacrity and renewed hope. The history of our convention may soon be told: nothing is done except deliberating about the plan of conducting the disputations. You remember the saying of Aristotle, 'It would be a happy thing for the world if *artists* were to be made the sole judges of the *arts*'—but we are *favored* with canonists and nobility as arbitrators, who are quite unacquainted with our concerns, and these again have certain *managers*, as they are termed on the stage, or, as Æschines calls them, *pettifoggers of the forum*, who cajole the public."

In a letter to Granville he intimates his opinion, "that good humored discussion might tend to remove sophisms and obscurities out of the way, and diminish the number of existing differences: at the same time he nobly avows his dislike of all inexplicitness and dissimulation which rather perplex than disentangle controversies; resolving for his part, whether in private or public conferences, TO SPEAK WHAT HE THINKS, FIRMLY BUT MODESTLY, AND TO CONCEDE WHAT HE DEEMS MAY BE CONCEDED, WITH UNAMBIGUOUS INGENUOUSNESS."

The conference being at length opened in January, 1541, a debate between Eckius and Melancthon ensued. The latter characterizes his antagonist as an apt disputant, but "more solicitous of contending for the prize of ingenuity than for truth." At the close of the third day, Granville received an order from the Emperor to suspend the proceedings, and meet him in person at a Diet which he appointed at Ratisbon. It was opened early in the spring, and all the Princes of the Empire were either personally present, or sent deputies. Unfortunately in going, Melancthon was overturned in the vehicle in which he travelled, which accident, though it was not a fatal one, so essentially injured his right hand, that he never afterwards recovered the proper use of it. His wrist was dislocated by the fall.

The Catholics and Protestants having agreed to a proposal by the Emperor, that the controversies about religion should be settled by conference between select persons from both parties, his Imperial Majesty, claiming the right of nomination, chose Julius Pflug, John Eckius, and John Gropper, on the one side, and Philip Melancthon, Martin Bucer, and John Pistorius, on the other. They were commanded to lay aside all passion, and respect only the glory of God. Granville, the Emperor's prime minister and commissioner at the conference, delivered a book to this Committee, which he said the Emperor desired them to peruse, but they were at liberty to approve or amend it as they pleased. It contained twenty-two articles, and was supposed to be written by Gropper. This paper was artfully constructed, but only led to long and fruitless discussions. Both parties appear to have raised objections against it; and Melancthon remarks in writing to one of his friends, that Eckius declared in a letter to the assembly of Princes, that he never had and never would approve this book, because it *Melancthonized* too much, for he suspected it to be either his dictation, or written with his advice and concurrence. But he totally disclaims it, and says that Eckius injured Gropper by this imputation. The legate, however, resented the Protestant objections, and the Diet was concluded by his Imperial Majesty's commanding that the Augsburg decree should continue in force, and all prosecutions in the Imperial chamber be suspended. At Ratisbon, every effort was made to discredit Melancthon with the Emperor; but he addressed a letter to him, refuting every charge in the most satisfactory manner.

In the course of the late discussions Melancthon remarked, that "the sacrament had no significance beyond its divinely appointed use, and that Christ was not present for the sake of the bread, but of the recipient;" a sentiment which so delighted Luther when it was repeated to him, that he exclaimed, "*Macte Philippe, tu eripuisti Pontificiis quod ego non ausus fuissem;* i. e. Admirable Philip, thou has seized from the Popedom what I should not have dared to attempt!" Eckius himself was exceedingly confounded, and as persons commonly do in similar circumstances, he uttered a violent speech in default of argument, and went home in a fit of indignation, which together with an unusual quantity of wine at supper the same evening, operated so powerfully as to produce a fever. He never again returned to the conference. Granville appears to have been considerably affected by his opponent's statements, for a few days afterwards he said, "I have been thinking, Philip, for these several days past, very closely upon your arguments, and I really perceive this controversy to be a most difficult one, and well worthy of itself to occupy the attention of a Council."

Melancthon had declared at the commencement of these discussions, "*Se mori malle, quam conscientiam et veritatem lædere et certissime ex mœrore moriturum, si id faceret:* that he would rather die than injure truth and violate his conscience, and certainly if he could possibly act so he should die with grief;" a noble declaration, and finely illustrated by the following incident. Eckius, during the heat of disputation, made use of some puzzling sophism, at which Melancthon paused, to revolve the statement in his mind, and at length replied, "I will give you an answer to-morrow." "Oh," said his antagonist, "there is no merit or honor in that, if you cannot answer me immediately." To which he replied in these memorable words, "*Mi Doctor, non quæro meam gloriam hoc in negocio, sed veritatem: cras, volente Deo, me audies.* My Doctor, I AM NOT SEEKING MY OWN GLORY IN THIS BUSINESS, BUT TRUTH: I say then, God willing, you shall have an answer to-morrow."

The same remarkable superiority of mind to all the incentives of ambition, was apparent in every part of his conduct. As he did not pursue fame, but truth, in his numerous conferences with the Catholics, so he did not aspire after rewards, but the promotion of the public good, in his academical labors. Indeed he was almost scrupulous to an extreme. Luther, in a letter addressed to the Elector of Saxony on the third of July, mentions Melancthon's hesitating to accept an increase of his salary to the amount of a hundred florins, and his wish to continue his Greek lectures, without any remuneration, that the ordinary stipend might be devoted to augment the revenue of the University. "But," says Luther, "he has sustained the greatest share of academical labor for upwards of twenty years past, and surely he has the greatest right to enjoy in quiet some of the profits. The junior masters, who are his scholars, are capable of teaching the Greek language. He has been a kind of general servant to the whole institution, and well merits the bounty of your Highness. *The whole Christian world is his debtor, and blessed be God, the Popish*

fraternity are more afraid of HIM *and his* SCHOLARS, *than all the learned besides put together.*"

A long and violent altercation between the Elector and the Popish party at Naumburg respecting the election of a bishop, occupied a considerable part of the year 1542. The state of the district rendered it a question of great importance. The majority of the ecclesiastical orders adhered to the degrading superstitions of Popery; but the inhabitants both of the towns and villages in the vicinity of the electorate, were panting to enjoy the doctrines of the Reformation. The Catholic influence was exerted to introduce Julius Pflug, one of the persons appointed in the select Committee at the recent conferences of Ratisbon, a man estimable in himself, but a decided Papist; the Elector on the other hand, tenacious of his right of nomination, and anxious to introduce a Reformer, after long and mature deliberations fixed upon Nicholas Amsdorff, who was eventually installed. On this occasion Luther and Melancthon, with many persons of eminence attended. The account of the Popish writer, Maimbourg, is sufficiently amusing. After intimating his displeasure at the *pride* and *insolence* of the abettors of Lutheranism, subsequently to the Council of Ratisbon, and mentioning the choice of Julius Pflug, he says, "the Duke of Saxony openly declared the election invalid, because he did not conform to the Augsburg confession, and nominated Nicholas Amsdorff in his stead, one of the principal and most zealous of the Lutherans, *upon whom his master Luther, who played the Pope at Wittemburg, laid his hands, and made him a bishop!*" The Emperor felt also excessively exasperated at these proceedings; but desired Pflug to exercise patience, "for," says he, "your cause shall be mine;" and accordingly a few years afterwards, he employed the strong arm of imperial power, to eject Amsdorff, who fled to Magdeburg, instating Pflug in the diocese of Saxe-Naumburg.

It was a mortifying circumstance to the Papists that the wide-spreading light of the Reformation extended at length into COLOGNE, and that the Archbishop and Elector Hermannus, or Herman, Count de Wied, whom Maimbourg and other writers highly panegyrize, both for his personal accomplishments and ardent zeal for the Catholic religion, became anxious at this period to reform his diocese. It was not indeed a sudden or momentary feeling. At the time of the Protestant convention at Frankfort, in the year 1539, the Archbishop sent Peter Medmannus to confer with Melancthon, and to request a visit from him; but he could at that time only return a congratulatory letter, in which he says, that "though his Lordship's personal regard to him was most grateful to his feelings, yet he was still more rejoiced on account of the public cause, as the Archbishop appeared desirous of applying proper remedies to heal the wounds of the church, instead of adopting measures calculated only to inflame and exasperate them." Towards the close of 1541, Hermannus sent for Martin Bucer, and had several conferences with him, in the following year, at Bonne; the result of which was a resolution to confer with proper persons, and pursue effectual means for the reformation of his diocese. On the fifteenth of January, 1543, he despatched letters to the Elector of Saxony, requesting him to allow Melancthon to come; who replied, after a considerable lapse of time, that he had given him permission to be absent from the University six or seven weeks. The letters of Melancthon sufficiently explain the transactions at Bonne. To Luther he writes thus, on the nineteenth of May. "The Bishop wishes a formulary of doctrines and ceremonies to be drawn up, similar to that of the Nuremberg church, and to be given to him for his inspection. I have been engaged in this the last three days. He is desirous of introducing pure doctrinal truth, and of exterminating whatever rites are now publicly practised in opposition to it; but the canons in general resist this innovation, though there are some amongst them who aim to restrain the violence of their brethren. The Bishop has been fiercely threatened to be driven from his dignity; on which account the Landgrave has written to the college, and openly avowed his own determination, and that of the confederate Princes, to unite, if it be requisite, in his defence. All the cities excepting Cologne, including the major part of the nobility are desirous of a better ecclesiastical constitution, which they see plainly enough to be necessary. I do believe that scarcely any part of Germany was in so barbarous and heathenish a state as this, which the prevailing idolatrous practices sufficiently evince; but I perceive the discourses of Bucer and Pistorius are much regarded, and I think they preach the truth. There are others also who teach the people sound doctrine, and administer the sacraments as they ought, in some of the neighboring towns and villages." In another letter, addressed to Camerarius, he says, "You could not witness without tears the wretched state of these churches, in which the people are daily crowding to the images, and this with the ignorant multitude is the sum and substance of religion. The aged Prince rightly judges, that reform is necessary, and seeks to introduce it. I have only at present begun the formulary of doctrine and ceremonies which is to be proposed to the churches. A few assist the Prince; at Cologne he is opposed, but in various places are to be found men of piety and correct sentiments." Again upon his return in August he writes, "After Bucer and myself had finished our work for the regulation of the churches, the aged Bishop, sending for his Dean and assistant, Stolbergius, a man of sense, and some other leading persons, desired me to read through the whole book in their presence, to which he paid the greatest attention, remarking upon many parts of it, sometimes suggesting very proper alterations, sometimes after discussing a point submitting to our opinion in preference to his own. This labor occupied four hours every morning in six successive days. I wondered at the assiduity and diligence of the old man."

When the Archbishop presented the Articles, which the deputation of Reformers had drawn up, to the chapter at Cologne; they requested time to examine it, while the Protestant doctors were expelled the city. With the former request he readily complied, but alleged in reference to the latter, he could not consent, unless they were convicted of false doctrines and immoral conduct. An acrimonious publication under the following title soon appeared; "*Judicium Deputatorum Universitatis et Secundarii Cleri Coloniensis de Doctrina et Vocatione Martini Buceri;*" upon which Melancthon remarks: "The publications of the Colognians is issued. It is not so much against Bucer as against the doctrine of our churches in general, and against our princes. It is the worthy effort of a well-fed Carmelite, and priest of Bacchus and Venus. They had entitled it, "*The Judgment of the Clergy and the University;*" but when some of the more sane members of the college saw it, and perceived it was much more worthy of buffoons than of clergymen, they insisted upon a change of the title, and protested they did not approve such a production: upon which, instead of *The Clergy*, it was agreed to use the term *Inferior Clergy*, by which some understand the *baser* description. Lutheranism is prodigiously railed at; and upon the subject of marriage, the vilest and most obscene language is used, such as would almost disgrace a prostitute. The jests are culled

from the comedies of Plautus, whose writings I dare say are more charming to this Carmelite than the Psalms of David."

Bucer and Melancthon both published a reply to this *unclerical* publication; that of the latter is one of his very best writings. He first singles out the dissentient individuals, for whom he cherishes a sincere regard; and then with a cogency of argument and a pungency of satire, attacks the remaining part of the fraternity. He tells them that neither Eckius nor Pighius, madly as they wrote, ever equalled the atrocious language of these Colognians. He jokes upon the word *secundarius* in the title-page, and supposes they mean the *low* and *degenerate* part of the community. On the subject of the mass he remarks, that there is no more reason for adoring the bread in the sacrament of the supper, than the water in the ordinance of baptism. "If Ambrose and Augustine were to rise from the dead, to say nothing of the apostles, and to witness the superstitious mockeries now practised, the long processions of wooden, silver, and marble images, the superintendents and expositor of sacred mysteries carrying about the bread, and the surrounding multitude prostrating themselves in adoration of it, they would be alarmed, and ready to ask into what heathen land they had got, and what new ceremonies were invented since their day, for they could not imagine themselves in Christian churches. But when they came to be informed that this was the manner in which the Lord's Supper was observed, they would burn with grief and indignation, and begin to exhort the people to return to the genuine use of the sacrament, and to the proper services of religion. There was formerly a custom of a similar nature prevalent in Persia, in which the sacred fire was carried about to be worshipped by the populace, and three hundred and sixty-five priests, answering in number to the days of the year, led the way, carrying particular ensigns." To this statement he adds a solemn exhortation and relates a circumstance, which he declares he received from the best authority, respecting a priest who went to Tubingen, where he carried about some relics consisting of bones, promising to every one that kissed them a security from the plague during the period of a whole year. When Prince Eberhard, who was possessed both of wisdom and influence, had him taken up for his ridiculous impudence, the priest alleged that he had certainly stated what was most true, because the people did not in fact kiss *the relics*, but only *the glass case in which they were put!* "Such," says Melancthon, "are the miserable shifts to which you resort to excuse your ecclesiastical abuses, and think to escape the censures of the pious: the people in the mean time being confirmed in error and superstition." He ridicules their pretended attempts at reform, representing them as "willing to wipe the dust off the images in their temples, to new color the old worn out pictures upon the walls, and passing an oracular decree to double the size of the square altars, that they may have a more magnificent appearance. They enact laws against letting the beards grow, and concerning the vain repetition of unintelligible payers. These are the mighty things which they require to be restored, and which they complain of the Prince for hindering."*

Unhappily, in consequence of the firm resistance of the chancellor, canons and divines of Cologne, to the reforming plans of the good Archbishop, the Popish religion was still maintained in that Electorate. They did not hesitate to avow "that they would rather live under a Turkish government than under a magistrate who approved and defended such a reformation." But the city of Hildesheim abolished the Catholic superstitions, and embraced the Protestant faith.

The University of Wittemberg received their illustrious Professor with the most marked respect, after he had finished the transactions at Cologne. Sensible of the lustre his still increasing celebrity shed upon their whole body, impressed with a deep sense of his public efforts in the cause of the Reformation, his academical labors and his numerous private virtues, he was welcomed home by a sort of public entrance. The students and most of the professors in the different branches of literature, went out to meet him on the road, and to hail his return.

But the cup of human life is never replenished with unmingled good; the sweet and the bitter are mixed in their due proportions by an all-wise providence. It seems upon a close inspection as if human happiness were more equally distributed by the unsparing hand of divine liberality than the envious and the petulant too frequently imagine. Great talents, or external splendors are sometimes connected with inward heart burnings and domestic anxieties; while poverty and rags are often the only patrimony of noble and wisely contented spirits. Sorrow, like death, visits alike the palace and the cottage. Melancthon became at this period involved in the utmost perplexity and grief by the improper behavior of one of his sons-in-law, and the removal of his daughter into Prussia, circumstances which have been mentioned in an early part of this work, in connection with a view of his domestic character. His mind always tending to despondency, was much agitated also by the loss of several of his friends, particularly Valerius Cordus, a person of elegant taste and extensive erudition. His death occurred at Rome, and was supposed to have originated in excessive fatigue, incurred by a laborious search, amongst the cold mountains and vallies of Italy, after herbs, roots, and plants for medical purposes, to which he was devoted. The sacrametal controversy was renewed with increased asperity, and so violent was Luther, and so conciliating was Melancthon, that, availing themselves of the favorable moment, their mutual enemies attempted to foment their dissension, but in vain; for though at one period a cloud seemed to be gathering over the brightness of their friendship, it soon entirely disappeared. In fact Luther seems to have kindled with unusual rage against the sacramentarians, and to have used a provoking intemperance of language, which, though his conscientious convictions and the barbarous usages of the age may be admitted as some extenuation, could not by any means be approved by his amiable friend. At the same time the Protestants in France were in a deplorable situation, and Francis and Charles V. were engaged in a furious war, which however terminated in September, 1544, by a treaty of peace at Crespy.

The Elector Palatine Frederic, successor to Louis, being animated with zeal to reform the churches under his jurisdiction, obtained in the beginning of the year 1545, a plan for this purpose, drawn up by Melancthon, and presented with his signature, in conjunction with those of Luther, Bugenhagen or Pomeranus, Cruciger and Major. It

* The Pope thinking it necessary to show the Protestants that he was not averse to every kind of Reformation, had appointed four Cardinals and five other eminent persons to draw up a plan for the reformation of the church; but it was extremely superficial and partial. It was published about the year 1539 at Antwerp, with the answer of Cochlæus to the objections of Sturmius, who, as well as Luther and Melancthon, had turned it into ridicule. In this plan the most intolerable grievances of which the Protestants complained are left totally unredressed.

is a judicious compendium, in six divisions, stated in these words:

"The true and salutary administration of the Christian church chiefly consists in these six particulars:

"I. In pure doctrinal truth, which God has revealed, transmitted, and commanded to be taught in his church.

"II. In the legitimate use of the sacraments.

"III. In the maintenance of a gospel ministry, and the due obedience to pastors, according to the will of God, who has promised to afford his presence and protection to such a ministry.

"IV. In the preservation of strict and holy discipline, by the proper exercise of ecclesiastical authority and jurisdiction.

"V. In a proper regard for the establishment of schools, and the direction of necessary studies.

"VI. To these, it is proper to add, the support of officers who may be wanted for necessary services in the church."

Another very important duty in which Melancthon was engaged, was the episcopal ordination of the prince of Anhalt, which shed such a pleasing lustre on the present year. The reader will not deem it an uninteresting digression to introduce this circumstance in a connected but necessarily brief sketch of his life.

George, prince of Anhalt, and count of Ascania, was descended from the dukes of Saxony, and was born on the fourteenth of August, 1507. His father, prince Ernest, of Anhalt, gave him a liberal education at the university of Leipsic, under George Forchem, who was no less celebrated for correctness of conduct than for capacity as a preceptor. Camerarius, Cruciger, and others, studied under this eminent tutor, who had the pleasure of finding in the prince of Anhalt, an apt and diligent scholar. He devoted a considerable degree of attention to the civil law, which his rank in life seemed particularly to require. At the age of twenty-two, his proficiency in every branch of knowledge, and his reputation for eloquence were such, that Albert, Elector of Mentz, chose him to be one of his council, and he became, in consequence, very much engaged in state affairs. At the rise of the Reformation, his ardent mind soon interested itself in the pursuit of truth; he perfected himself in the Greek and Hebrew languages, searched the holy Scriptures with diligent investigation, read the best commentators amongst the fathers, and cultivated an intercourse with some of the most learned men. Often with tears, he was known to pray, "Deal with thy servant according to thy mercy, and teach, O teach me thy righteousness!"

At length he openly embraced the Reformation, planted seminaries of learning, and strenuously opposed the popish superstitions. Multitudes saw and rejoiced in the wide-spreading light, and he constantly co-operated with his brothers, in establishing the reformed religion in their respective territories. For the purpose of more extensive usefulness, he was induced, in the year 1545, to accept the bishopric of Mersburg, in Saxony, an office upon which he entered with fervent prayer, and afterwards discharged with extraordinary assiduity. His letter of episcopal ordination, written by Melancthon, is thus expressed:

"We give thanks to God the eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who of his infinite goodness has instituted a gospel ministry, for the recovery of the fallen race of mankind, and will maintain it through the successive ages of time till the resurrection of the dead; and who raises up learned and suitable persons, giving command to his church that such should be called to the office; and promises through their ministry to dispense the doctrine of the remission of sins, the gift of the Holy Spirit and eternal life. We beseech him not to permit the light of his gospel to be extinguished, but that he would raise up faithful men to advocate and uphold the pure and salutary doctrines of Christ, and now in this territory, gather to himself a people to celebrate his praises to eternity. As the most reverend and illustrious George, prince of Anhalt, count of Ascania, lord of Bernburg, &c. appointed to this gospel ministry over the church at Magdeburg, has been called in a regular and pious manner to the discharge of ecclesiastical functions in the bishopric of Mersburg, certain serious and learned persons who superintend the neighboring churches, and whose names are under-written, have been sent for to be present, conformably to the custom of the ancient primitive churches, that they might here give their public testimony of ordination in addition to the general call to the office. We are, therefore, assembled for this purpose, because we well know that the illustrious prince George, understands and firmly embraces the pure doctrines of the gospel, which all the churches of God, in these parts, unite with one voice and one soul with the church universal in professing, and the glory of which is to promote holiness and virtue. We have attended to his ordination in the apostolic manner of laying on of hands; for Paul admonished Titus that Presbyters should be every where ordained to teach and govern the churches. Be it known that this ordination to an ecclesiastical function derives its authority from apostolic practice, and as priests are appointed to teach and rule churches, to watch over doctrinal sentiments, and moral conduct, let the words of the Son of God be in constant recollection, 'When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.' And as Christ sitteth at the right hand of the Father, to give efficacy to the public ministry, we pray that he would rule over this whole district and bless this ordination. 'Whoso loveth me and keepeth my words, him will my Father love; and we will come to him and make our abode with him.' Such is his promise, and we exhort the prince to be encouraged by the declaration; for though the government of a church is attended with many and great dangers, nor can human wisdom avail for such an undertaking, yet let him know that God is truly present and will constantly dwell wherever his gospel is preached; that he will defend and support it. With this conviction the labors of such a ministry may be undertaken and sustained. Mersburg, August 3, 1545."

This eminent person discharged the duties of his sacred office with exemplary diligence. His whole time was devoted to preaching, reading, writing, devotional exercises and the affairs of the church. He never intentionally injured any one, but benefited many, both publicly and privately. He was a promoter of peace amongst the princes, settling many of their disputes, and restraining turbulence and faction, being himself superior to all motives of mean ambition. He sustained many and great injuries with the utmost magnanimity, lived a life of devotion with God, and resignation to his will, often admonishing others to cultivate similar feelings. After lingering under a painful disease, during which he settled the affairs of his church, engaged in the most ardent devotions, frequently conversed on the most interesting religious topics and daily read the sacred Scriptures, particularly the prophetic and apostolic writings, "on the seventeenth of October, 1553, his spirit was called away from this mortal state to the assembly of the heavenly church."

The most celebrated German poets wrote elegies upon his death. Two epigrams of Melancthon are preserved, one of which shall be inserted.

Ascaniæ stirpis virtus est clara triumphis:
Ordine quos numerant secula longa patrum.
Cæsar in Adriaco quum gessit littore bellum,
Et fregit venetas Maximilianus opes:
Duxerat Ascania natus de stirpe Rodolphus:
Fixit et in Veneto multa trophæa solo.
Nunc ad majora decora, hæc laus magna, Georgi,
Accedit, vere principe digna viro:
Quod sic doctrinam reliquis virtutibus addis,
Ut verum celebres pectore et ore Deum:
Et Christi illustres ingentia munera scriptis;
Justifica supplex quæ capis ipse fide:
Exemploque Esdræ populum dum jure gubernas:
Doctrinæ spargis semina pura simul.
Summe Deus, solus qui das felicia regna,
Ascanios fratres, te precor, ipse regas!

For ages past behold Ascania's line,
In martial virtues and achievements shine!
When through the coasts of Italy afar,
Imperial prowess poured the tide of war;
Then Maximilian—then Rodolphus gains
Trophies of valor on Venetian plains;—
Still to sustain the glory of his race
A GEORGE is giv'n, the high descent to grace;
Though for each manly virtue far renown'd,
With brighter honor, brighter glory crown'd,
He lov'd the truth—the God of truth he serv'd,
The faith of Christ he honor'd and preserv'd;
Like Esdra ruling well, but on each hand,
Spreading the seeds of truth throughout the land.
'Tis thine, great God! 'tis thine alone to cause
Nations to triumph in their kings and laws,
To rule o'er rulers, and assign their place;
Oh, condescend to bless the Ascanian race!

CHAPTER XI.

Persecuting measures—Death of Luther—Melancthon's Funeral Oration for him—Tributary lines—Remarks on the friendship of Luther and Melancthon—Position of public affairs—The Emperor and the Protestants at open war—Perfidy of Maurice—Captivity of John Frederic, and imprisonment of the Landgrave—Diet at Augsburg—The Interim meetings of the Wittemberg and Leipsic Divines—Melancthon's publication on indifferent things—Extracts from his reply to the Interim—Curious preface to an English translation of it—The virulent opposition of Flaccus Illyricus to Melancthon—Reply of the latter. 1546 to 1550.

PERSISTING in his resolution, notwithstanding the objections of the Protestants, the Roman Pontiff summoned a general council, to be held at Trent, while the Emperor at the Diet of Worms, in the year 1545, used every effort to persuade all parties to acquiesce in that appointment. It was in vain; and the pen of Melancthon was again employed to prepare a publication in the name of the Reformers, containing the chief reasons which induced them to dissent from the papal decree. It is entitled, "*Causæ, quare et amplexæ sint, et retinendam ducant doctrinam, quam profitentur Ecclesiæ, quæ Confessionem, Augustæ exhibitam Imperatori sequuntur et quare iniquis judicibus collectis in Synodo Tridentina ut vocant, non sit assentiendum;*" and "on account of the excellence of the matter, the weight of the argument, and a certain original beauty of style, cannot fail of profiting every reader."

The Emperor being exasperated at the continual objections, raised against the council, departed at last from his usual course of conduct and determined to settle all religious disputes by force of arms. The Elector of Saxony and the Landgrave of Hesse, immediately adopted proper measures for their own defence. At Worms, the clergy of Cologne, had presented a petition to the Emperor, against the proceedings of their archbishop, in establishing the reformed religion, and he instantly took them into his protection, not only interdicting by his imperial letters any molestation of the Catholics in the electorate, but summoning the Elector to appear before him within thirty days. The Pope issued a similar summons for sixty days to the archbishop, dean, and five canons of Cologne, who had espoused his cause. In the succeeding January, 1546, the Protestant princes assembled at Frankfort, made common cause with the persecuted archbishop, and united to defend themselves against the violent designs of the Emperor.

If ever the presiding genius of Martin Luther were requisite to direct the intricate concerns of the Reformation, the present crisis seemed particularly to demand his talents. The gathering tempest frowned with a portentous aspect upon all Germany; the newly launched vessel in which many of their princes had embarked with a noble and adventurous spirit, and which had hitherto been driven about by so many raging winds, became at this time exposed to a storm of unusual violence, and every voice was lifted up to demand the pilotage of the first, as in many respects, the greatest of the Reformers. It is not easy, therefore, to express or imagine the consternation with which the princes and reformers in general, and his most intimate friend Melancthon in particular, received the intelligence of his death at this alarming period. In consequence of repeated attacks of the stone his constitution had been declining for many months, and early in the morning of the eighteenth of February, 1546, he died at Eisleben, his native place, whither he had gone a second time to settle some existing differences between the counts of Mansfeld. A few hours afterwards, Jonas communicated the melancholy tidings to the Elector of Saxony, and requested his highness to inform his wife, Melancthon, Pomeranus, and Cruciger. In the first journey to Eisleben, a short time before, Melancthon had accompanied him, and must have deeply regretted his absence on the last painful occasion. When he first received the intelligence of his death, he exclaimed, "My Father! my Father! the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof!" 2 Kings ii. 12. He was interred at Wittemberg. Pomeranus preached a funeral sermon, and Melancthon pronounced the following oration.

"Although amidst this general mourning, my voice is obstructed by deep affliction and tears, yet something I would attempt to say; not to eulogize the dead as the heathen do, but to admonish the living in this vast assembly, and especially to impress just sentiments upon the junior part of the auditory, respecting the government of the church and its dangers, that they may learn what to desire and by what examples to regulate their lives. Wicked and infidel men represent every thing in the present apparent confusion of human affairs as the result of mere chance, but confiding in the numerous and explicit declarations of God himself, we distinguish the church from the promiscuous multitude of mankind, and affirm it is under divine superintendence and protection. To this we constantly look, obeying our lawful governors, and cherishing a pious reverence for those guides and instructors whom we choose.

"It will be necessary to advert to these considerations as often as the name of Martin Luther, our most beloved father and teacher is introduced, whom we love and honor, detestable as he appears in the eyes of many wicked men, and whom we know to have been raised up by heaven as a minister of the true gospel, by evidences which, notwithstanding the charges of our opponents, prove that his doctrines were neither seditious nor dispersed abroad with a blind and impetuous zeal.

"In this place, and on these occasions, many things are usually said in a panegyrical strain respecting the personal endowments of the deceased; I propose, however, to omit these, and advert

chiefly to his ecclesiastical function. Intelligent and pious persons will admit, if he were the means of promoting useful and necessary truth in the church, we ought to be grateful to the providence of God for raising up such a light, while his labors, faith, perseverance, and other virtues, ought to be duly acknowledged and his memory tenderly cherished by all worthy men.

"The apostle Paul represents Christ as 'having ascended on high to give gifts unto men,' that is, the preaching of the gospel and the Holy Spirit; for the purpose of communicating which, 'he gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers;' Ephesians, iv. 8, 11., selecting them from amongst those who read, study and delight in the sacred writings. Nor are they only called into the Christian service who occupy the more ordinary stations, but others are frequently introduced under the direction of learned men into this holy warfare, and it is both pleasing and profitable to witness the care of God to his church throughout all ages, in sending a continued succession of useful men, that as some fall in the glorious field, others may instantly rush forward to take their places. The first of our race who nobly occupied the foremost ranks, were Adam, Seth, Enoch, Methuselah, Noah and Shem. The latter being yet alive and dwelling in the neighborhood of Sodom, when the inhabitants of the earth forgetting the instructions of Noah and Shem, became addicted to idolatry; God raised up a coadjutor of Shem in the person of Abraham, to co-operate in the great work of propagating divine truth. To him succeeded Isaac, Jacob and Joseph, who kindled the light of true religion in Egypt, at that period the most flourishing empire in the world; and to them, Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David, Elijah and Elisha, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel and Zacheriah. After them arose Esdras, Onias and the Maccabees; then Simeon, Zacharias, John the Baptist, CHRIST, and his apostles. I am delighted to contemplate this unbroken succession, which affords conspicuous evidence of the presence of God in his church. The apostles were succeeded by a troop, so to speak, of inferior warriors, but nevertheless distinguished of heaven, Polycarp, Irenæus, Gregory of Neocæsarea, Basil, Augustin, Prosper, Maximus, Hugo, Bernard, Taulerus, and others. And although the latter ages present a more barren prospect, God has always preserved a proportion of his servants upon the earth; and now through Martin Luther, a more splendid period of light and truth has appeared.

"To this enumeration of the most eminent amongst the sons of men who gathered and reformed the church of God, may be added others who may be regarded as the flower of mankind. Solon, Themistocles, Scipio, Augustus, and others, who either established or ruled over mighty empires, were indeed truly great men, but far, far inferior to our illustrious leaders, Isaiah, John the Baptist, Paul, Augustin and Luther, and it becomes us to study this distinction. What then are those great and important things which Luther has disclosed to our view, and which render his life so remarkable; for many are exclaiming against him as a disturber of the church, and a promoter of inexplicable controversies? I answer, that when the Holy Spirit in his regulation of the church reproves the world for sin, dissensions arise out of the pertinacity of wicked men, and they alone are culpable who refuse to listen to the proclamation of the eternal Father concerning his Son, 'This is my beloved Son, HEAR HIM.' Luther explained the true and important doctrine of penitence, which was involved in the profoundest darkness. He showed in what it consists, and where refuge and consolation could be obtained under a sense of divine displeasure. He illustrated the statements of Paul respecting justification by faith, and showed the distinction between the law and the gospel, civil and spiritual justification. He pointed out the true principle of prayer and exterminated that heathenish absurdity from the church, that God was not to be invoked if the mind entertained the least doubt upon an academic question. He admonished men to pray in the exercise of faith and a good conscience to the only Mediator, and Son of God, who is seated at the right hand of the Father making intercession for us, and not to images or deceased saints, according to the shocking practice of the ignorant multitude. He also pointed out other services acceptable to God, was singularly exemplary himself in all the duties of life, and separated the puerilities of human rites and ceremonies which prevent instead of promoting genuine worship, from those services which are essential to obedience. In order that heavenly truth might be transmitted to posterity, he translated the prophetic and apostolic writings into the German language with so much accuracy, that his version of itself places Scripture in a more perspicuous light than most commentaries. But he published also various expositions upon the sacred writings, which in the judgment of Erasmus, by far excelled all others: and as it is recorded respecting those who rebuilt Jerusalem, 'with one hand they laid the stones and with the other they held the sword,' so while he composed annotations on Scripture replete with heavenly instruction and consoled afflicted consciences by his pious counsels, he was necessitated at the same time to wage incessant war with the adversaries of evangelical truth. When it is recollected that this truth, especially the doctrine of faith and the remission of sins, is not discoverable by the merely human eye, it must be acknowledged he was taught of God, and many of us have witnessed his anxious solicitude to impress the great principle of acceptance by faith. Multitudes of the saints will therefore praise God to all eternity, for the benefits which have accrued to the church by the labors of Luther. To God their gratitude is primarily due, and then they will own themselves much indebted to his labors, although infidels who ridicule the church in general will consider these noble performances as no better than empty trifling or absolute insanity. The true church does not, as some falsely affirm, promote intricate disputations, throw out the apple of contention, and propose the enigmas of the fabled Sphinx; for to those who judge seriously and without prejudice, it is easy from a comparison of opposite opinions, to perceive what are consonant to the statements of heavenly truth and what are otherwise. Christians are no longer in a state of hesitation on the subject of existing controversies, for when God determined to reveal his will and display his character in the sacred writings, it is not to be imagined that such a communication would be ambiguous like the leaves of the ancient Sibyl.

"Some, by no means evil-minded persons, however, express a suspicion that Luther manifested too much asperity. I will not affirm, the reverse, but only quote the language of Erasmus, 'God has sent in this latter a violent physician on account of the magnitude of the existing disorders,' fulfilling by such a dispensation the divine message to Jeremiah, 'Behold I have put my words in thy mouth. See I have this day set thee over the nations, and over the kingdoms, to root out and pull down, and to destroy and to throw down, to build and to plant.' Jeremiah, i. 9, 10. Nor does God govern his church according to the counsels of men, nor choose to employ instruments like theirs to promote his pur-

poses. But it is usual for inferior minds to dislike those of a more ardent character. When Aristides observed the mighty affairs which Themistocles by the impulse of a superior genius undertook and happily accomplished, although he congratulated the state on the advantage it possessed in such a man, he studied every means to divert his zealous mind from its pursuits. I do not deny that ardent spirits are sometimes betrayed into undue impetuosity, for no one is totally exempt from the weaknesses incident to human nature, but they often merit the praise assigned by the ancient proverb to Hercules, Cimon and other illustrious characters, 'rough indeed, but distinguished by the best principles.' So in the Christian church, the apostle Paul mentions such as 'war a good warfare, holding faith and a good conscience,' 1 Timothy, i. 18, 19, and who are both pleasing to God and estimable amongst pious men. Such an one was Luther, who while he constantly defended the pure doctrines of Christianity, maintained a conscientious integrity of character. No vain licentiousness was ever detected in him, no seditious counsels, but on the contrary, he often urged the most pacific measures; and never, never did he blend political artifices for the augmentation of power with ecclesiastical affairs. Such wisdom and such virtue, I am persuaded, do not result from mere human skill or diligence, but the mind must be divinely influenced, especially when it is of the more rough, elevated and ardent cast like that of Luther.

"What shall I say of his other virtues? Often have I myself gone to him unawares and found him dissolved in tears and prayers for the church of Christ. He devoted a certain portion of almost every day to the solemn reading of the Psalms of David with which he mingled his own supplications, amidst sighs and tears; and he has frequently declared how indignant he felt against those who hastened over devotional exercises through sloth or the pretence of other occupations. On this account, said he, divine wisdom has prescribed some formularies of prayer, that our minds may be inflamed with devotion by reading them; to which, in his opinion, reading aloud very much conduced. When a variety of great and important deliberations respecting public dangers have been pending, we have witnessed his prodigious vigor of mind, his fearless and unshaken courage. Faith was his sheet anchor, and by the help of God he was resolved never to be driven from it. Such was his penetration, that he perceived at once what was to be done in the most perplexing conjunctures; nor was he as some supposed, negligent of the public good or disregardful of the wishes of others, but he was well acquainted with the interests of the state, and pre-eminently sagacious in discovering the capacity and dispositions of all about him. And although he possessed such extraordinary acuteness of intellect, he read both ancient and modern ecclesiastical writings with the utmost avidity, and histories of every kind, applying the examples they furnished to existing circumstances with remarkable dexterity. The undecaying monuments of his eloquence remain, and in my opinion he equalled any of those who have been most celebrated for their resplendent oratorical powers.

"The removal of such a character from amongst us, of one who was endowed with the greatest intellectual capacity, well instructed and long experienced in the knowledge of Christian truth, adorned with numerous excellencies and with virtues of the most heroic cast, chosen by divine Providence to reform the church of God, and cherishing for all of us a truly paternal affection—the removal, I say, of such a man demands and justifies our tears. We resemble orphans bereft of an excellent and faithful father; but while it is necessary to submit to the will of heaven, let us not allow the memory of his virtues and his good offices to perish. He was an important instrument in the hands of God of public utility; let us diligently study the truth he taught, imitating in our humble situations his fear of God, his faith, the intensity of his devotions, the integrity of his ministerial character, his purity, his careful avoidance of seditious counsel, his ardent thirst of knowledge. And as we frequently meditate upon the pious examples of those illustrious guides of the church, Jeremiah, John the Baptist and Paul, whose histories are transmitted to us, so let us frequently reflect upon the doctrine and course of life which distinguished our departed friend. Let the present vast assembly now unite with me in grateful thanks and fervent supplications, saying in the spirit of ardent devotion—'We give thanks to thee, Almighty God, the eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the author and founder of thy church, together with thy co-eternal Son and the Holy Spirit, wise, good, merciful, just, true, powerful and sovereign, because thou dost gather a heritage for thy Son, from amongst the human race, and dost maintain the ministry of the gospel, and hast now reformed thy church by means of Luther; we present our ardent supplications that thou wouldst henceforth preserve, fix, and impress upon our hearts the doctrines of truth, as Isaiah prayed for his disciples; and that by thy Holy Spirit thou wouldst enflame our minds with a pure devotion, and direct our feet into the paths of holy obedience!'

"As the removal of illustrious men from the church, is frequently a means of punishing their survivors, such of us as are entrusted with the office of tuition, myself personally, and all of us collectively, entreat you to reflect upon the present calamities that threaten the whole earth. Yonder, the Turks are advancing, here, civil discord threatens, and there, other adversaries released at last from the apprehension of Luther's censures, will proceed with a perverse ingenuity, and with increased boldness to corrupt the genuine truth. That God may avert these evils, let us be more diligent in the regulation of our lives and studies, always retainind a deep impression of this sentiment in our minds, that as long as we maintain, hear, obey, and love the pure doctrines of the gospel, God will always have a church and a dwelling place among us. 'If,' said Jesus Christ, 'a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.' John xv. 23. Encouraged by this ample promise, let us be stimulated to inculcate the truth of heaven, knowing that the church will be the preservation of the human race, and the security of established governments; and let us constantly elevate our minds to that future and eternal state of being, to which God himself calls our attention, who has not given so many witnesses, nor sent his Son into the world in vain, but delights in the communication of these magnificent blessings. Amen."

Melancthon composed the following tributary lines to the memory of Luther:

Occidit omnigena venerandus laude Lutherus
Qui Christum docuit non dubitante fide
Ereptum deflet vero hunc ecclesia luctu
Cujus erat doctor, verius, imo pater.
Occidit Israel præstans auriga Lutherus
Quem mecum sanus lugeat omnis homo
Nunc luctumque suum lacrymoso carmine prodat
Hoc etenim orbatos flere, dolore decet.

Luther, illustrious name! is now no more;—
Let the true church with streaming eyes deplore

A TEACHER firm in faith—nay, rather say
A FATHER, from his children snatch'd away.
Luther is gone—the pilot of our course:
O let the tearful Muse his name rehearse—
Let all the pious join with me to mourn,
Orphans should thus bedew a father's urn.

The sympathizing heart will naturally linger upon the affecting consideration of Luther's decease. It was the earthly termination of an uninterrupted and unusual intimacy of nearly TWENTY-EIGHT YEARS with Philip Melancthon. To judge of the survivor's feelings requires either a mind of remarkable sensibility, or the experience of a similar loss. This deprivation of Luther's valuable counsels, and friendly reproofs, of his consoling sympathy amidst the trials of life, and of his directing wisdom amidst the peculiar difficulties incident to the circumstances of the age in which they lived, must have inflicted a deep and lasting pang. Their attachment, founded on principle, was so completely mutual, that they were become almost necessary to each other. The agony of separation, therefore, must have been exquisite:—

"O the soft commerce! O the tender ties,
Close twisted with the fibres of the heart!
Which, broken, break them, and drain off the soul
Of human joy, and make it pain to live—
And is it then to live? When *such* friends part,
'Tis the *survivor* dies———"
* *Young's Night Thoughts*, 5.

I said it was the *earthly* termination of their intimacy, for religious friendship can never, never end. If the soul of man be immortal, and if, as seems more than probable, it will carry with it into another world those principles of action, those modes of thinking, those characteristic qualities, which constituted each one's individuality and very being upon earth, then the connections of time will be perpetuated amidst the raptures of eternity. For though distances and separations are incident to the condition of the present life, it neither comports with our ideas of the benevolence of the Deity, nor with the representations of Scripture, nor indeed with our most ennobling desires and hopes, to suppose these imperfections of our temporal destiny will attach to our future existence. And not only will the recollection of past friendship endear our future intercourse, but the superiority of our celestial character, acquired by a nearer and more constant approach to the source of light and holiness, will infinitely purify it. Friendship founded on just principles arises from the perception of moral excellence, associated with any other striking or attractive qualities, besides a consciousness of some natural similarity of taste or character; it must be allowed, therefore, that the increase of what constitutes the principle of mutual attraction, will necessarily produce a proportionate increase of attachment. If moral excellence be now esteemed in its present imperfect degree and degraded state, associated as it is with glaring defects, dwarfish in its growth, irregular in its shape and full of infirmity, unquestionably it will prove hereafter in its maturity and glory, a stronger bond of union. And because every principle and faculty is capable of continual improvement, and will hereafter, under happier circumstances, admit of more rapid increase, and more extensive augmentation, than at present, the friendship of another world may be considered as everlastingly progressive, and, from the constitution of celestial spirits, indissoluble.

The conduct of Melancthon and Luther to each other, affords an admirable illustration of the true *basis* of religious friendship. They were not perfectly *agreed*, but they were perfectly *united*. Mutual forbearance admitted the free exercise of an independent mind, and secured the rights of conscience and the purity of principle. Societies have been distracted, families divided, and even empires convulsed, from the existence of differences in religious sentiment or practice, far less considerable than those which subsisted between these eminent friends. They knew each other, and did not allow the whirlwinds of a temporary passion to dissipate feelings founded on the best principles, and cherished by an unreserved intercourse. There were many who at different times endeavored to divide them, by fomenting discord, in order to gain their respective influence and authority to some other party or interest: but they were too confident in each other, and too well persuaded of the magnitude of the cause which claimed their mutual co-operation and incessant efforts, to be cajoled into disagreement. If, therefore, our friendships were formed upon more solid principles of union than they frequently are, it is obvious they would prove more satisfactory, more beneficial and more permanent. In all our religious intercourse, it would be wise to aim at securing the essentials of Christianity, rather than to be solicitous of accomplishing what is notoriously impossible, a perfect agreement in points of inferior consideration. The pious Baxter has admirably remarked, "Were we all bound together by a confession or subscription of the true fundamentals, and those other points that are next to fundamentals only, and there took up our Christianity and unity, yielding to each other a freedom of differing in smaller or more difficult points, or in expressing ourselves in different terms, and so did live peaceably and lovingly together, notwithstanding such differences, as men that all knew the mysteriousness of divinity, and the imperfection of their own understandings, and that here we know but in part, and therefore shall most certainly err and differ in part, what a world of mischief might this course prevent? I oft think on the examples of Luther and Melancthon. It was not a few things that they differed in, nor such as would now be accounted small, besides the imperious harshness of Luther's disposition, as Carlosladt could witness, and yet how sweetly and peaceably and lovingly did they live together, without any considerable breach or disagreement. As Mel. Adamus says of them, 'Etsi tempora fuerunt ad distractiones proclivia hominumque levitas dissidiorum cupida tamen cum alter alterius vitia nosset, nunquam inter eos simultas extitit ex qua animorum alienatio subsecuta sit;'—so that their agreement arose not hence, that either was free from faults or error, but knowing each other's faults, they did more easily bear them. Certainly if every difference in judgment in matters of religion should seem intolerable or make a breach in affection, then no two men on earth must live together, or tolerate each other, but every man must resolve to live by himself, for no two on earth but differ in one thing or other, except such as take all their faith upon trust, and explicitly believe nothing at all. God hath not made our judgments all of a complexion no more than our faces, nor our knowledge all of a size any more than our bodies; and methinks they that be not resolved to be any thing in religion, should be afraid of making the articles of their faith so numerous, lest they should shortly become heretics themselves, by disagreeing from themselves; and they should be afraid of making too strict laws for those that differ in judgment in controvertible points, lest they should shortly change their judgments, and so make a rod for their own backs; for how know they, in difficult disputable cases, but within this twelve-months, themselves may be of ano-

ther mind, except they are resolved never to change for fear of incurring the reproach of novelty and mutability; and then they were best resolve to study no more, or ever to be wiser. I would we knew at what age a man must receive this principle against changing his judgment. I am afraid lest at last they should teach it their children, and lest many divines did learn it too young: and if any besides Christ and his apostles must be standard and foundation of our faith, I would we could certainly tell who they are, for I have heard yet of none but the Pope or his general council expressly lay claim to the prerogative of infallibility, and I think there is few that have appeared more fallible."

The principal points of difference between Melancthon and Luther were three: 1. Melancthon thought that the ancient form of ecclesiastical government might be retained, on condition of not annulling the authority of Scriptural truth; to which Luther could not assent. 2. Melancthon conceived that Luther carried his doctrine respecting justification by faith only to such an extent as to nullify the importance and obligation of good works, so that his statements required explanation. 3. Melancthon appears to have differed from Luther in his opinion respecting the sacrament, particularly in the latter period of his life. He did not believe that the opinions of the Zuinglians ought to occasion a disunion among the reformers; bu Luther was decided upon this point to his dying day. Maclaine very unnecessarily corrects Mosheim in his statement of this subject. It is obvious that *at first*, as Mosheim represents, "Melancthon adopted the sentiments of Luther in relation to the Eucharist," but in consequence of serious examination, his mind became enlightened, so that he admitted the scriptural idea by degrees, and towards the close of his life in his letters to Calvin, intimates his persuasion of the erroneous and idolatrous nature of the doctrine of consubstantiation. The character of Melancthon has been misunderstood on this as on other occasions. It has been intimated that an unwarrantable timidity prevented his avowing explicitly his opinions respecting the sacrament. It is true it *did* arise from his apprehension lest such an avowal should inflame discord and injure the great and general cause of the reformation. But whether this apprehension were well or ill founded, or whether such a policy were justifiable or unjustifiable, and we are by no means prepared to defend it, such *was* Melancthon's *real principle* of action, and not any mean timidity or fear of personal danger or suffering. If this concealment for the sake of peace had really involved him in personal suffering instead of shielding him from it, it is due to the greatness of his character and the conscientious scrupulousness of his mind, to believe he would nevertheless have adhered to it.

It was not from personal considerations only that Melancthon felt the bitterness of his bereavement in the death of Luther; he was sensible of the public loss, and of the great and daily increasing difficulties of his own situation. Political affairs had never yet assumed so alarming an appearance, and they became almost identified with ecclesiastical ones, owing to the conspicuous part which was acted by the most distinguished of the German princes. Though during the past ten years he had been called to take the lead in most of the public transactions relative to religion, having been employed to write every thing that was to be written, and to do almost every thing that was to be done, yet he had constantly profited by his unreserved familiarity with Luther, with whom he consulted and corresponded on every occasion. Now he was required to act in a great measure alone, and in consequence of his rare merit as a divine and a scholar, which had acquired him a high reputation in every country of Europe, he became at once elevated to an undisputed pre-eminence amongst the leading reformers of the age.

The zealous efforts of Bucer to unite the Swiss and German churches by an agreement on the subject of the sacrament having been defeated by Luther's determined hostility, his death seemed to furnish a favorable opportunity for the accomplishment of this long-projected reconciliation. Melancthon and his followers were known to be extremely solicitous of this union, and were disposed to go to the utmost length which their consciences would permit to extinguish the flame of discord. The high mutual esteem subsisting between Bucer and John Calvin, the celebrated Pastor and Professor of Divinity at Geneva, appeared to facilitate this design. Anxious to promote Bucer and Melancthon's views, Calvin proposed a mode of explaining the subject, which, while it denied the corporeal presence, allowed a divine virtue and efficacy communicated by Christ with the bread and wine of the sacrament to those who partook of it with a lively faith and integrity of heart: but he has been generally censured by Protestants for making unwarrantable concessions for the sake of peace. The fair prospect, however, soon became obscured, in consequence of the occupation of Melancthon in other violent controversies to be mentioned hereafter, which left him no leisure for that co-operation with Calvin which probably might have produced the happiest results; and still more on account of the intemperate zeal of Joachim Westphal, pastor of the church at Hamburg, who both adopted the sentiments and manifested the too uncharitable spirit of Luther.

The Pope and the Emperor were now resolved to accomplish the ruin of the Protestants. The council of Trent decreed, that the apocryphal writings should be received as of equal authority with the books which the Jews and primitive Christians admitted into the sacred canon, that the traditions of the church should be equally regarded with the doctrines and precepts of the inspired apostles, that the Vulgate translation should be read in the churches, and deemed authentic and canonical: and that all who disputed these truths were anathematized in the name of the Holy Ghost. By this means they aimed a deadly blow at the very root and principle of Protestantism; and the Pope soon afterwards exhibited a striking proof of his disposition to exterminate it root and branch. Availing himself of the appeal of the canons of Cologne against their archbishop, he convicted him of heresy, and issued a bull by which he was deprived of his ecclesiastical dignity, and his subjects absolved from their oath of allegiance to him as their prince. There was no reason to doubt the concurrence of the Emperor in this sentence, who was maturing the most deep-laid schemes for the subversion of the Protestant faith, under an impenetrable veil of dissimulation. In the month of March he contrived to have an interview with the Landgrave of Hesse, who was more suspicious of his design than any of the other confederates, and he made such professions of attachment to the interests of Germany, and of his dislike to violent measures, stoutly denying that he was engaged in any military preparations, that the Landgrave, cajoled by his plausibility, dismissed his own apprehensions, and quieted the fears of the Smalcaldian confederacy.

At length public affairs were brought to such a crisis, that the Emperor and the Protestants were at open war. No decisive superiority was acquired on either side during the autumn of 1546; but Maurice Duke of Saxony, and uncle to John Frederic, by an act of perfidy as strange and unnatural as al-

most any transaction recorded in the annals of history, for the purpose of gratifying a mean and most detestable ambition, invaded the Electoral dominions under the Imperial promises that he should possess them, in consequence of which the Elector was necessitated to retreat homewards. He was eagerly pursued by the Emperor and eventually defeated and taken prisoner, on the twenty-fourth of April, 1547, at Muhlberg on the Elbe. The Landgrave of Hesse was induced by the infamous Maurice to throw himself upon the clemency of the Emperor, under an express stipulation for his liberty, which availed nothing when self-interest and policy dictated another act of imperial treachery.

During the progress of this war the University of Wittemberg suffered a temporary dissolution. In the month of November 1546, the students were dismissed, and Melancthon with his wife and family retired to Zerbst, in the principality of Anhalt, the residence of the princes of Anhalt-Zerbst. He was afterwards invited to the offices of Theological and Philosophical professor at Jena, whither some of the princes attempted to collect again the scattered members of the University; but nothing could detach his mind from the beloved scene of his early labors and most endeared associations, and he returned to Wittemberg. His name was a sufficient attraction, and recalled the greater part of the fugitives. The lectures recommenced in October, and he successively directed the attention of his students to the Epistle of Paul to the Colossians and to the Proverbs of Solomon. The new-made Elector who had so unworthily usurped his present dignities and possessions, requested him to repair to Leipsic in 1547, to deliberate upon the constitution of an academy and the regulation of ecclesiastical affairs, but on many accounts he chose to decline the honor of this invitation. Maurice, as a matter of course, fully concurred in the Emperor's proposal at a Diet held at Augsburg, soon after the captivity of John Frederic and the imprisonment of the Landgrave of Hesse, to refer the decision of all religious disputes to the long projected council of Trent. It was also easy for his Imperial Majesty, with a formidable army at hand, to overawe the majority of the assembly into a similar concurrence. Swords are very powerful arguments, and a man may legislate as he pleases when they are drawn in his defence. The purpose however was not answered. The plague was said to infest the city, the consequence of which was the removal of the council to Bologna, which proved in effect its dissolution. Anxious to devise some method to preserve a religious tranquillity, the politic Charles commanded Julius Pflug, bishop of Naumburg, Michael Sidonius and John Agricola, of Eisleben, to draw up a temporary rule of faith and worship for the use of both parties. This was called the INTERIM, because it was professedly appointed only for the period of time which might elapse previous to the assembling of a general council. It contained all the essential doctrines of the church of Rome, though veiled under artful and ambiguous modes of expression. It was promulgated at Augsburg with the greatest solemnity, and afterwards enforced by the Imperial sword.*

The deplorable consequences resulting from this attempt of Charles to legislate for the faith of those whose consciences were proof against the attacks of imperial power, and who resolved like some of the earliest heroes in the same field to obey God rather than men, are thus represented by Melancthon: "Upwards of four hundred pastors in Suevia and the circles of the Rhine are driven from their stations. There is but a single officiating minister at this moment at Tubingen who conforms to the book published at Augsburg; it has had the effect of driving away all the preachers and pastors. It is truly astonishing therefore, that Agricola should persist in promising in consequence of this publication, another golden age, when it evidently ruins such a multitude of churches, and so many pious and learned men with their families are gone into voluntary exile."

Agricola was liberally rewarded by the Emperor and by Ferdinand; and Sidonius obtained the bishopric of Mersburg in Saxony. This furnished occasion for a common joke being passed upon them, "that they only defended the Popish Chrism and Oil as being necessary to salvation, that they might come off the better greased themselves."

The new and perfidious Elector, notwithstanding his obligations to his equally perfidious patron, hesitated in dubious neutrality respecting the adoption of the Interim until the year 1548, when he assembled the Saxon nobility and clergy at Leipsic to assist him in forming a proper determination. Melancthon attended no fewer than SEVEN conferences upon this subject, and wrote all the pieces that were presented as well as the censures which were passed upon the different divisions of that imperial creed.

This was a very critical period in his life. It will be necessary to examine it with attention and to dwell upon it with some minuteness of detail, in order to afford the reader ample materials for the due appreciation of his character. Not only was Melancthon perpetually exposed to the vilest calumny, but all his conduct and words were misrepresented to the Emperor, and plots were laid against his life. The fury of party was raging to cut him off at a stroke, but he was preserved amidst the danger, and survived the tempest. The Emperor even sent to summon him into his immediate presence, but Maurice himself became his advocate and protector.

The divines of Wittemberg and Leipsic assembled upon the subject of the Interim successively at Begy, Zell, and Juterbock, whither Agricola was sent by the Elector of Brandenburg to meet them. The result of these deliberations was the publication of a book written by Melancthon, and of a decree founded upon it respecting the observance of things of an indifferent nature. The Emperor being anxious to enforce his own creed, and Maurice, though a Protestant, not to displease him to whom he had been so highly indebted, consulted the Protestant leaders, especially Melancthon, respecting the extent to which concessions might be made with a safe conscience, in order to avoid the extremes of servility and violent opposition. In reviewing the Interim it was thought this conciliating medium might be discovered in the omission of some practices and opinions, while the essentials of Christianity were retained. The volume referred to, contained a particular statement of such articles.

As this publication and the *Adiaphoristic Controversy* resulting from it became a fruitful source of

* Among a variety of other articles, the Interim affirms "that works of supererogation are to be commanded: that the church hath the power of interpreting Scripture; that the Pope is head of the church by virtue of the prerogative granted to Peter; that by confirmation and chrism the Holy Ghost is received; that extreme unction is to be administered; that the sacrament is a sacrifice, and that in it we are to celebrate the memory of saints, that they may intercede with God the Father with us, and help us by their merits: that we must pray to God for the dead; that in every town and every church two masses a day at least be said, that in country parishes and villages one, especially on holidays; that on Easter Eve and Whitsunday Eve the water in the font be consecrated."

the most envenomed disputes, in which Melancthon was represented as having abandoned the truth through excessive timidity or servile compliance, and as ecclesiastical writers have by their representations perpetuated this unfavorable impression to the present hour, it is incumbent on a faithful biographer either candidly to avow the fatal blemish, or by an impartial examination of authentic documents, to remove these false impressions, if the aspersed character be indeed capable of vindication. The reader will admit that the first and most direct means of ascertaining the fact, is an appeal to Melancthon's own reply to the Interim: we shall therefore extract its statements on those topics in particular which occasioned the clamors of his most violent adversaries; and they will prove amply sufficient to furnish his defence.

"If we deny and persecute acknowledged truth, we blaspheme God, an unpardonable sin, from which we pray that he would graciously defend us. And although threatened with war and destruction, we must still adhere to the word of God, and not deny acknowledged truth. As to the *danger* incurred by the defence of what is preached in our churches and we know to be truth, *we will entrust the affair to God.*

"As the articles in the Interim are various, some right and some wrong, some in which all pious persons concur, and some otherwise, *we will plainly avow our convictions, not rejecting what is true out of caprice or violence, nor allowing what is obviously erroneous.*

"The first three articles respecting the creation and fall of man, original sin, and the redemption of the world through Jesus Christ we fully admit; but to the fourth on justification we object: because it states that a man is justified or made righteous by the exercise of love, as a work, a sentiment which is afterwards repeated, for a man is righteous before God and pleases him for the sake of Christ and through faith in his name. And though the Emperor's publication states in some places that a man becomes righteous through faith; the meaning evidently is, that faith is a preparation of the heart beforehand, and that afterwards a man is rendered righteous by the work of love. It asserts also the obnoxious principle that there may be true faith although a man live with an evil conscience and have no love, and that love constitutes a meritorious title to eternal life. So that according to these representations a man is justified and pleases God by his own works, a doctrine long ago taught by monks and friars. The truth is, although we must possess love and a good conscience, yet we are justified before God, or please him through our Saviour and redeemer Jesus Christ, FOR HIS SAKE ALONE and through faith in him, but by no means on account of our own merit or virtue.

"At the same time we diligently teach the necessity of deep repentance, sincere love, and a good conscience, because 'he that loveth not abideth in death.' But we must cleave to Jesus the Mediator and seek the communication of every grace through him, for 'in thy sight,' to adopt the language of the Psalmist, 'can no man living be justified;' and again, 'for thy *name's sake*, O Lord, pardon mine iniquities.' When in our necessities we supplicate the Throne of Grace, it becomes us to be humbled under a sense of our misery and our guilt, and to implore consolation through him who is our Great Peace-maker. 'Being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.'

"To prove that this is the original and immutable principle in the church of God in all ages, St. Paul refers to the example of Abraham, declaring that 'Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness;' that is, although Abraham was distinguished for his great and eminent virtues, yet his righteousness *before God* whom he pleased, consisted in his faith in the promises which were graciously vouchsafed to him.

"There are many points relative to the order and power of the bishops which we cannot but oppose--but as these remarks are general, and the language is often ambiguous, we advise our most gracious prince not to animadvert much upon this article. The church is a congregation or assembly of persons who possess real faith in Christ, and no man ought to separate himself from the *true* church: but the question is who compose it?—Separation from the church is charged upon us as a crime of the greatest magnitude; but if the adversaries of truth continue obstinate, and thus occasion discord and debate, surely *they* are guilty before God, and not the poor pious souls who receive or preach it. 'If,' says Paul, 'an angel from heaven preach any other gospel let him be accursed'—but there exist at the present moment many grievous errors and abuses under the authority of the Roman Pontiff, which even the book of the Interim itself has denounced, but which the councils of Trent and Bonony have advocated. If the bishops would induce us to obey them it must be upon this condition, that they do not persecute the truth, nor re-establish the impious ceremonies. God has graciously explained his mind and will in his Scriptures: THESE WE MUST HEAR AND RECEIVE, and not as in worldly kingdoms be made to submit to the expositions of some one man who is empowered to give them at his own pleasure.

"Our churches practise those ceremonies which conduce to good order, and if any person imagine there is any thing in such indifferent things which with the good advice of those who regulate the church, appears calculated to promote uniformity or good order we will readily assist, for on this subject we will not contend. We are indifferent whether men eat flesh or fish. As to prayers and hymns addressed to departed saints, I have before said they are inadmissible; the same may be said of processions of the sacrament. It is also well known to our adversaries, that private masses, invocation of saints, and the procession, with other practices, if they might admit of some excuse or extenuation, are however both needless and dangerous, and the re-establishment of them in our churches, will strengthen the monstrous errors and abuses of our adversaries; and they know also that that offence will deeply grieve many pious men and occasion much persecution, proscription, imprisonment, and perhaps the murder of priests and others.

"Let the potentates and rulers consider, amidst the alarms of war now prevalent, what they will and what they ought to do in this affair, for the defence of the church. AS FOR MYSELF, I AM READY BY THE GRACE OF GOD TO DEPART HENCE, AND IF NEED BE, TO SUFFER.

"We have been lately written to, and admonished not to preach, teach or write against this Interim, but necessity compels us to say thus much with all humility of mind, that we will not alter in what we have hitherto taught in our churches; for *no creature possesses power or authority to change the word of God*, and it is at every one's peril to deny or forsake the known truth. As therefore this Interim is opposed in many of its articles to the truth we have advocated, we feel it necessary to publish, in a Christian spirit, an explicit answer; *the danger incurred by this measure, we cheerfully face, committing all to the eternal God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.* And as of his infinite goodness, he has gathered to himself a church in these realms, by means which surpass the wisdom and thoughts of all men, we earnestly pray that he will always

upnold, preserve, and place it under a good and righteous superintendency."

This performance was translated into English as soon as it issued from the German press, by one John Rogers, and as it is a curious piece of antiquity, we insert the translator's preface, entire. It is not only amusing, but elucidatory of the present subject.

"Because I with great griefe have nowe often heard, most dere Reader, that the highly learned and no lesse godly, jentle and loving man Phillip Melancthon is highlye belyed, in that a great sorte openlye saye that he hath denyed the trueth or, that I maye use their owne wordes, recanted; whiche thyng they saye onely to hyndre the furtherance of God's trueth, I coulde do no lesse but turne into our Englyshe speache and also put out this little treatise of his: not so muche for the defence of his moste named and knowen fames sake, which he hath yet hitherto kepte undefiled, so that even the greatest enemyes of the gospell neither coulde nor have saied otherwise of hym, as for the confortyng of many godly and Christen heartes, whiche have bene not alytell dismayed and discouraged thorow suche lyes. And verely not without a cause, for his denying would do more harme to the trueth in these last and most perelouse tymes than any tongue or penne can expresse. And God of his goodnesse, bountefull mercye and great power, graunt that that never chaunce. At this tyme also thankes be to God therefore, he hath not onely not denyed the trueth but also after his olde accustomed Christen manier, plainelye confessed and acknowledged it: whiche thyng this his answere to the Interim, ynough witnesseth.

"And although this his writing be shorte and answere not to al the poyntes of the Interim, for that would aske great labor and long tyme, yet it playnely answereth to the greetest misuses, and to the very senowes of the Rome-bushops moste tyrannouse kyngdome contayned in that boke.

"He also sheweth tokens ynoughe in the booke that he will at leasure and largelier write upon manye poyntes thereof. I received also a letter with this treatise from a nother godly and learned man, wherein is writen that other and divers learned men in Dutchlande be in hand to shewe their meaning in writing as touchyng the same, so that we may be of muche better comforte then our Papistes would gladly se, yea then manye of the good and faithfull be, that that Interim will be wstanded and not so sone and easely receaved as the Papistes hope and many Christen feare. This I saie chiefelye caused me to putte out this litle boke at this time.

"But for that there be haply many that know not what that Interim meaneth, for some have not seen and some have nott harde of it, ye and the moste understande not the worde, as they that understand no Latine, or not very well, neede dryveth me to shewe bothe what it is and also the meanyng of the worde. Interim is a booke whiche was at the Emperowres Maiesties commandement prynted and put forth about the begynnyng of June, in this yere of our Saviours birthe 1548, wherein is commanded that al the cities in Dutchlande that have receaved the worde of God, and made a chaunge of ceremonys accordyng to the word shal reforme their churches agayne, and turne to the olde Popishe ordinaunces as a dog dothe to that he hathe spued out, or a washen swyne to the myre.

"Thus have ye harde what it is. Now heare what the word signifyeth or betokeneth.

"Interim is as muche to saye, as in the meane season or in the meane while. And therfore have they christened the childe and geven him this name because they wyll that we kepe all the thynges commanded and contayned in that booke, in the meane while from this highedutche parlament holden at Augsburg till there be a generall councell holden. There they thynke (but God sitteth above in heaven and thynketh haply otherwyse) to make that matter worsse. For because it had been an hastye worcke to have chaunged all thynges at once, they of their great (I had almost sayed) grevouse and mercilesse mercy have borne with us in two thynges, that is to saye, in the Maryage of Priestes and receiving of the communion in both the kindes. But how long forsoth?—*Interim*, that is in the meane while till the generall councell come. And thynke then to beare no longer with us, no nor with Christe himselfe, for then they thynke to be so strong, that neyther Christe himselfe nor all that wyll abyde by hym shall be able to withstande them. This is the meanyng of the worde in Englyshe.

"Unto this Interim and meaning thereof hathe thabove named Phil. Melancthon answered and written this present treatise, and sheweth to what thinges a Christen man maye agre, and which thynges may be chaunged and whiche not; in whiche treatise the reader shal well perceave that he nether hath denied the trueth that he hath thus longe taught and acknowledged, nor yet thinketh to do; whiche vertu and high gyfte of God, the Almighti Father of our Lord Jesus Christ increase in him and all the Christen to the honour and glory of his holy name, increase of his knowledge and saving of many soules.—Amen. *At London, in Edward Whitchurch House, by John Rogers*, I. *Augusti*, 1548."

The affair of the Interim occupied the attention of several conventions in the year 1549, and Melancthon devoted a considerable share of his time, not only in these attendances, but in writing letters of advice, respecting indifferent things to the pastors of the various churches in Hamburg, Frankfort, Mansfeld, and the various districts of Upper and Lower Saxony. These interesting documents uniformly breathe the same pious and pacific spirit, mingled with their author's characteristic prudence. To the former of these churches, he very distinctly states his sentiments respecting what are denominated indifferent things. "We do not call magical consecrations, worshipping of images, the procession of the host, and other similar services openly condemned, both in our discourses and writings, nor such absurdities, as nocturnal visits to the tombs of saints, *indifferent things;* but they are shockingly multiplied either for the purpose of provoking us, or with a crafty design to impose heavier burdens upon the pastors, and they do us an injury while they humor their own passions. There are many things appointed by the most ancient of churches, and conducive to the beauty of orderly worship and the instruction of the lower classes, as the order of festivals and of lessons, public assemblings, examination and absolution previous to the reception of the sacrament, certain rites in public penitence, examination in confirming, public ordination to the ministry of the gospel, public betrothing to the marriage, the form of prayers used in nuptial ceremonies, and funeral orations over the dead."

One of the first and most virulent of all the opponents of Melancthon at this period, was Matthias Flacius, or Flaccus Illyricus. He was a native of Albona, in Istria, and in the year 1541, he went to Wittemberg, where he became a disciple of Luther and Melancthon, and afterwards taught Greek and Hebrew for a subsistence. He was treated with the utmost kindness and liberality by Melancthon, and in 1544, through his and Luther's influence, he obtained a public employment in the university.

During the period of dispersion, which the scholars suffered in consequence of the war, he resided at Brunswick, and delivered lectures, which acquired him considerable reputation, but afterwards returned to Wittemberg in 1547. When the controversies arose respecting the Interim, he retired to Magdeburg, which was at that time put under the ban of the empire. He is represented as a man of excellent talents, great wit, and extensive learning, but turbulent, furious, and of a most contentious disposition.

Flacius at first ventured only upon the private circulation of some sarcastic misrepresentations of the meetings of the divines of Wittemburg; but afterwards he openly slandered them, although he had no certain information of the subjects of their conferences. Melancthon was blameably negligent of his private papers, and would often confess it to his friends, particularly Camerarius, who remonstrated with him upon the subject. Flacius by this means surrepticiously obtained possession of copies of several of his letters and other writings, and considering himself sufficiently armed for a more public attack, he first united himself with some of Melancthon's bitterest enemies, Gallus, Amsdorff, Wigand, Judex, Faber, and others: then published at Magdeburg, a variety of slanders against him and all his party, advising every one to avoid them as the very pests of the church. He had the audacity to proclaim himself as "the only true prophet, teacher, and defender of the religious interests of the Christian community, and admonished every one to observe the evil consequences resulting from their secret assemblies and conferences—that now there was an end to all pure religion—that gospel liberty was betrayed—that they were returned to the once rejected yoke of Papal domination—and that the poor flock of Christ was recommended again to the mitred bishops." To prove these charges, he published a copy of the decree of Leipsic, and other minor writings which had been proposed to the states, and compared these with the book of the Interim. He distorted every sentence, and by artful misrepresentations, endeavored to persuade every one that the different articles of the decree contained the most deadly poison. In addition to this he declared, "that the forms of the church ought to be constantly maintained inviolate, without allowing the smallest alteration according to the appointments of the Interim, and that if the Emperor or the Papists should molest any one, it would be proper to resort to arms for defence."

After some time, Melancthon having patiently borne every reproach, wrote a reply to these statements, which merits insertion, not only on account of the excellent spirit which pervades it, but because it effectually refutes the misrepresentations of Mosheim and his learned commentator. It is dignified, pious and solid.

"As it ought to be every one's principal concern to know and worship God aright, and as he has revealed himself in his church, inviting all to hear his voice and to fly to the standard of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is represented by Isaiah as "set up for a standard to the people," (Chap. xlix. 22,) it is of the utmost importance amidst this general confusion of mankind, wisely to consider and to inquire what constitutes the true church, and where it is to be found; that wherever we are, we may form a part of it by adopting the principles of the true faith, and connecting ourselves with the people of God. This church is dispersed throughout the world, but is distinguishable from the impious part of mankind by infallible signs; for such as maintain the truth of the gospel, and the proper use of the sacraments, to the rejection of idolatrous services, constitute, *wherever situated*, the true church of God, and may be satisfactorily distinguished from others, by their reception of the Scriptures.

"Amidst the wreck of empires and the dispersion of their subjects, good men possess this consolation, that wherever they hear the incorruptible word of truth, and witness the legitimate use of sacraments, the rejection of idolatry, and of those errors which oppose the commands of Jesus Christ, there they feel confident of having discovered the true church, there is the family of God, there he is present by the ministry of the gospel, there the supplications of faith are heard, there the genuine worship of God is conducted, and there the Son of God gathers an eternal inheritance. 'Where two or three,' said he, 'are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.' Mat. xviii. 20.

"In periods of public dissension, we have need of these consoling sentiments, and I have introduced them here, because our churches, which know the importance of these considerations, are at this moment exceedingly disturbed by numerous clamors. The same doctrine is taught in them as is proclaimed in our writings: the sacraments continue unaltered: errors in faith and images in worship, as our books sufficiently testify, are discarded.

"But Flacius Illyricus exclaims that our doctrine is changed, and that we have restored certain ceremonies which had been abolished. Let us examine these charges; and *first*, concerning *doctrine*. The instructions of all the public teachers in our churches and seminaries, at once refute this calumny, and to avoid any prolix statement, let me refer to what I have written in the volume entitled, 'Loci Communes Theologici,' which is in many hands, and in which I did not aim to establish a new faith, but accurately to represent that which was common to all our churches, as exhibited in the confession of Augsburg, presented in 1530, to the Emperor, which I consider the invariable sentiments of the true universal church of Christ; a statement I wish to be understood as having written without sophism, and without any calumnious intention. I am conscious of having compiled that epitome of doctrine, not for the purpose of seeking to differ from others, not for the mere love of novelty, not from a desire of controversy, nor from any other base or unworthy motive: but circumstances required it. When in the first inspection of the churches we had to encounter a variety of reproaches from ignorant persons, I published in a compressed form, a summary of doctrine which Luther had delivered in volumes of discourses and expositions, and studied a mode of expression which might conduce to accuracy of views in those who were taught, and to general unanimity; always submitting what was written to the judgment of our churches, and of Luther himself, whose opinions on many points I particularly inquired, and copies of whose writings are in the possession of many. I now call God to witness my profession of this doctrine, which, as I have already stated, I am satisfied perfectly coincides with that of the universal church of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by his assistance I resolve to bring this confession into general use in the church. This I mention lest any one should reproach me for hindering the faith of others by my own doubts.

"In the next place, it is requisite to offer a few words of reply to the charge respecting *ceremonies*. I certainly could have wished, especially in the present afflictive circumstances, that the churches should not have been disturbed by any change, but if such be the case, it does not originate with me. But I confess that I have persuaded the people of Franconia and others not to abandon their churches on account of any service with which they could comply without impiety. For although Flacius cries out vehemently that the churches had better

be deserted, and the princes alarmed by the fear of sedition, I should not choose to be the author of such wretched advice. It is plain that we must endure much greater burdens in the cause of literature and religion than mere dress—as the hatred of the great, the insolent contempt of the populace, the malevolence of hypocritical friends, the dissensions of the priesthood, poverty, persecution, and other evils which accompany even a quiet government; but these turbulent times produce many greater miseries.

"But as we must not desert our posts on this account, we may sustain lighter servitude if it can be done with a good conscience. The distressing situation of the present times, in which there are such divisions in sentiment and affection, seem to me to require that these oppressed churches should be comforted and strengthened by all the aids that piety can afford, and that we should take care that the most important doctrines should be faithfully explained and transmitted to posterity, and that the universities be supported as the depositories of general literature.

"The representation of Flacius, respecting somebody, who I know not, having reported, that I have declared we ought not to withdraw from the churches, although the ancient abuses should be reinstated, is absolutely false.

"Now mark this crafty man; in order to excite suspicion and inflame hatred, he produces many sentences dropped in familiar discourse, which he calumniously misinterprets, and also attributes sayings to others of his own invention, that he might appear not only to have witnesses, but agents at his command. Nor have I ever thought or said what he falsely imputes to me, that we ought to remain in those churches in which old errors are restored, mass invocation of saints, and other impious services which we have condemned in our publications. I do openly declare that such idolatrous rites should neither be practised nor endured: and that students may be the better instructed in every particular, I have explained the occasions and origin of controversy with great care and labor.

"Here if I were inclined to indulge my grief, I might justly complain of Flacius, who circulates such falsehoods to my detriment, and might detail the origin of those distresses which overwhelm the whole church, explaining those circumstances which tend to strengthen the boldness and confirm the power of our adversaries against the truth. But I am unwilling to open these wounds, and I beseech these advocates of liberty to allow me and others, at least to endure our afflictions in peace, and not excite more cruel dissensions.

"He boasts that he will be the advocate of the pristine state of things. If by this expression he refers to particular empires and governments, and confines the church only to its own walls, his idea is very incorrect; for the church is scattered abroad in various kingdoms, publishing the incorruptible word of the gospel, and serving God by the tears and groans of genuine worship. But as he states he was once so familiarly acquainted with me, he could testify my pains and sorrows and zealous care. We lament the disturbed state of public affairs and of kingdoms, nor do we ask for garrisons and ramparts of defence, but in our churches we publish the gospel of truth, serving God in the knowledge and faith of his Son, and aiming to the best of our feeble efforts to promote the literary pursuits of our youth, and the preservation of discipline. If this advocate of the primitive state of things can restore this golden age to our churches, let him triumph as much as he will.

"Why he should particularly attack me, who have never offended him, as Marius did Antonius, I know not, for he is aware that I have been always opposed to the corruptions of religion, and have censured the prevailing errors. Now he says I have encouraged them, because it has been my advice not to quit the churches on account of a surplice or any thing of that kind. If dissension arises on these subjects, the commandments respecting charity, should not be forgotten, especially as he knows our great afflictions, and that we neither seek dominion nor wealth. We should not imitate the example of worldly disputants whose impetuosity is often such as to exemplify the proverb, 'One serpent eats another lest it should become a dragon.' He now not only threatens to write against me, but to do something worse. I could wish that we rather cooperated to illustrate essential truth, for there are sources enough of contention; so that we should renounce our hostility and labor, a mode of proceeding more conducive to our personal advantage and that of the whole church, lest it should happen as Paul says, 'take heed that ye do not devour one another.' I shall frame my answers with a view to utility, and hope, that both by my writings and by the opinion of the pious, I am sufficiently defended against calumny. Many good and learned men in different places, are greatly grieved that the churches are so unjustly censured. But I recommend Flacius and others to consider, what will be the consequence if mutual animosities revive the quarrels of thirty years. How deplorable would this be!

"Whenever he reports his idle stories and things professedly spoken in familiar conversations, he shows what kind of regard he has for the confidence of friendship and the rights of social intercourse. We naturally unbosom ourselves with more freedom amongst our friends, and often I have myself in maintaining a discussion strongly opposed an opinion which I really embraced, not in joke, but for the purpose of obtaining information from the views of others.

"Many are acquainted with my natural turn of mind, and that I am prone rather to indulge in jocoseness, even in the midst of afflictions, than to any thing like sternness. To catch and circulate my words on these occasions, as he has done, is mean and unkind, to say no worse. But if, as in some parts of his letter he threatens me with the sword, any evil should occur, and destruction should befall this poor head, I will commend myself to Jesus Christ, the Son of God, our Lord, who was crucified for us and raised again, who is the Searcher of hearts, and knows that I have inquired after truth with a careful simplicity of mind, not wishing either to gain factions and influence, or to indulge an unbridled curiosity. Nor has it been without great and diligent attention to the whole of Christian antiquity, that I have endeavored to unravel a variety of intricate questions, and to direct the studies of youth to important learning.

"But I will not speak of myself. In all civil dissensions I am aware that calamities are to be expected, the minds of men become inflamed, and I perceive Flacius prepared with his firebrands; but to God I commit my life, and his own true church here and in other places, respecting which I feel far more solicitous than of my own life. This, however, is my consolation, that God has promised his perpetual presence in the church, and his Son declares, 'Lo! I am with you always even to the end of the world.' He will preserve the people that maintain the doctrines of the gospel and that truly call upon his name; and I pray with the utmost fervor and importunity of soul that he would preserve his church in these regions.

"This brief reply to the clamors of Flacius, I have written, not so much on my own account as for the

sake of our churches in general, among whom many pious minds are deeply wounded by his writings. Let them be consoled by this assurance, that fundamental principles are faithfully retained in our churches; namely, the incorruptible ministry of the gospel, all the articles of faith and the use of the Christian sacraments without alteration. The Son of God it is most certain is present with such a ministry, and, as I have already said, hears the supplications of such an assembly. Adieu, candid reader. *October*, 1549."

It will be proper to subjoin to this defence the emphatic language he uses in an epistle to his friend Matthesius—"I trust you will not be influenced by the sycophantic writings of Flacius Illyricus, who invents absolute falsehoods. I have never *said*, I have never *written*, I have never *thought* what he declares I *have* said, respecting the phrase '*we are justified by faith only*;' namely, that it is absurd, and a kind of subtle trifling about words. I have indeed spoken and written many things respecting the manner in which the exclusive term is to be understood, as well as many others; and have been at great pains to correct the misinterpretations of many put upon the word *only*; but I propose replying to these virulent criminations."

If, in corresponding with his friends, Melancthon spoke of Flacius in very decided terms as a calumniator, we cannot feel much surprised; but that the flagrant misrepresentations of his adversary should have so deeply tinctured, as they have done, the accounts of distinguished historians, is truly deplorable. Even Mosheim and his commentator have obviously leaned to the unfavorable side of the subject; and rather perpetuated dishonorable impressions than carefully guarded his fame. The language of this great Reformer, which has been copiously quoted in the present work, is in itself sufficient to evince the nature of those principles by which he was actuated, and the extreme absurdity of charging him with tergiversation.

The Adiaphoristic controversy occasioned many other disputes, but we shall neither perplex our readers nor misspend our time by wandering into the briery wilderness of polemical divinity. To some of these debates, however, it will be proper briefly to allude, in relating the events of the time in which they were particularly agitated.

CHAPTER XII.

Articles prepared for the Council of Trent—Melancthon commences his journey thither—but returns, in consequence of Maurice changing his conduct, and declaring war against the Emperor—Peace of Passau—Plague—Withdrawment of the University of Wittemberg to Torgau—Osiander—Stancarus—Private afflictions—Meeting at Naumburg respecting the renewal of the ancient friendship subsisting between the houses of Saxony, Brandenburg and Hesse—Transactions relative to Servetus—John Frederic's release and death—Death of Maurice—Controversies—Persecutions of Flacius and his adherents—Melancthon's letters on the subject—Death of Jonas. 1550 to 1557.

In the year 1550, in consequence of the importunate entreaties of the Emperor, Pope Julius III. who had succeeded the departed Paul III. appointed a council to be held at Trent; and in the Diet of Augsburg all the German princes, overawed by the military attitude and resolute spirit of his Imperial Majesty, consented to this convention. The Elector Maurice was the least servile of any in this compliance, insisting upon these conditions, which, however, the archbishop of Mentz refused to enter in the registers, that doctrinal points should be re-examined and discussed—that this examination should be conducted in the presence of the Protestant divines—that they should have the liberty of *voting* as well as *deliberating*—and that the Pope should not preside in the proposed council, either in person or by his legates. Deeming it requisite to be fully prepared for the great occasion, Maurice commanded Melancthon to draw up an explicit statement of the principal articles of the Protestant faith, to be presented, if required, to the proposed council. A similar paper was written by Brentius in the name of the Wurtemburghers, and is called the *Confession of Wurtemburg*. When the former document was ready, the prince convened all the theologians at Leipsic, on the eighth of July, 1551, to hear it read and to deliberate upon its contents. It was unanimously approved, and published in Latin and German, in 1552, under the title of "Repetitio Augustanæ Confessionis, sive ut dicitur Confessio doctrinæ Saxonicarum ecclesiarum, Synodo tridentino oblata, anno 1551, in qua, christiane lector, videbis, quinam et Catholicæ Ecclesiæ gremio resilierint, et per quos stet, quominus ecclesiæ pia concordia sanciatur, 1552." This, which is called the *Saxonic Confession*, was received by the churches of Pomerania and Strasburg.

In the month of January, of the succeeding year, Melancthon began his journey to Trent. "Yesterday," says he, writing to George, prince of Anhalt, "I received letters from the court, containing the commands of our illustrious Elector, to George Major and myself to proceed to Nuremburg, where we are to wait further orders respecting our journey to the general council, the duke of Wurtemberg and the city of Strasburg having already sent their deputies. But as no particular instructions are given, I propose proceeding direct to Dresden, whence I will write to your highness. I sincerely wish the court would not disregard the advice which is approved by so many, that a general commission be sent, by common consent, to the council from the principal churches in the neighboring cities and districts. But I commend our cause to God." They were, however, directed to proceed only as far as Augsburg, till they received further instructions from prince Maurice for their future guidance. With this design they travelled to Nuremberg, where, in consequence of the high esteem in which Melancthon was held, they were received with the most marked distinction. They were lodged in a public building of the city, and every attention paid them which the most affectionate and solicitous benevolence could dictate. "The day after our arrival at Nuremberg," says Melancthon, "which was on the twenty-second of January, I received a packet of letters, sent by Doctor Padornus, from the city of Trent, in which it was intimated that the answer to the application, for a (Papal) safe conduct was still delayed. I wrote immediately that we were come to Nuremberg, and requested to be informed whether and when we were to proceed to Trent. I have also notified our journey to our own court. At present I have received no reply from either. We have been already delayed ten days at Nuremberg, in total uncertainty respecting our future progress, whether or when we are to go forward. In the mean time many in this place distinguish us by the most officious kindness and attention. Sarcerius preaches publicly to great concourses of people, and I have delivered several lectures."

During this delay public affairs assumed such a posture as not only to stop the progress of Melancthon and his associates, but to place Germany in a new and interesting situation. The time was at length arrived when the secret motives which influenced the newly-created Elector of Saxony to a mysteriousness of conduct which often perplexed and astonished the Protestants, were at length fully developed. From the intimacy to which the Emperor had admitted him, he soon perceived his design of becoming the absolute dictator of Germany, and every act convinced Maurice that he was secretly rivetting on the chains of servitude, which his ambition had forged for his degraded country. He

had frequently petitioned for the release of the Landgrave of Hesse from imprisonment; to petitions he added remonstrances; but nothing could induce Charles to fulfil his engagements. Maurice was aware at the same time, that he was elevated to a commanding ascendancy among the Protestant princes, and the fairest prospects presented themselves for the gratification of his own eagerness for power and distinction. With the most consummate address he succeeded in retaining the fatal confidence of the Emperor while he deceived him, and in not losing entirely that of the Protestants, while he was necessitated in public to pursue a course which they must have often considered dangerous to their religion, if not subversive of their liberties. At length he prepared to strike the blow, by soliciting the protection of Henry II. king of France, who agreed to declare war against the Emperor, professedly for the sole purpose of emancipating the Landgrave of Hesse, as a Catholic prince could not unite with a Protestant association upon a religious account. Application was also made to the king of England, but the cabals incident to a court during a minority (it was the reign of Edward VI.) prevented that attention to foreign, and especially to religious affairs, which might otherwise have been expected. A last application for the liberty of the captive Landgrave was made in vain; Maurice still cajoled the Emperor, affected to be more than ever anxious to remove the difficulties which had arisen respecting a safe conduct to the Protestant divines, and, as we have seen, even commanded Melancthon to proceed on his journey to the council of Trent. He further intimated his intention of meeting his Imperial Majesty in person at Inspruck. Many rumors were beginning to circulate, but the Emperor and his confidential adviser, Granvelle, bishop of Arras, totally disregarded them; the sagacious minister and his imperial master being both lulled into a fatal security.

At length Maurice took up arms, and published a manifesto, in which he represented that the defence of the Protestant religion, the liberties of Germany, and the release of the Landgrave of Hesse from unjust imprisonment, were the principal motives of his conduct. The council of Trent was instantly prorogued for two years, but circumstances prevented its actually re-assembling for the space of ten. It is impossible not to perceive, in the infatuation of Charles V. and his advisers, and the political manœuvres resulting from the ambitious views and private resentments of the Elector Maurice, that superintending Providence, which, though it permitted a sea of troubles to flow in upon the Protestant cause, and almost to inundate the territories of religious Reformation for a time, appointed the happy moment when the tide should ebb, and Germany be free.

Melancthon in this extraordinary crisis willingly returned to Wittemberg, to resume his various duties both of a private and public nature. The city which had so welcomed his arrival, rendered him every honor upon his departure. "It would have been a very proper procedure," says he, writing to the Prince of Anhalt, "to have sent a general deputation from various churches to the council, as your Highness thought from the very first, but our advice on this subject, as your Highness knows, was afterwards disregarded. When therefore none of the princes or cities sent deputies, and no commands were given us except by the Elector of Saxony, I felt, I confess, the strongest disinclination to the journey; and when we could not proceed any further, I returned most willingly under the guidance of Providence to Wittemberg, although I was very much persuaded to remain in the country. Aware, indeed, that there were many unwise and evil-minded persons at Trent, I would nevertheless have gone had Germany continued in a state of tranquillity. Now distress forces me to return, or rather I judge it a very unseasonable period to be disputing concerning Pontifical authority, in a council, amidst the alarms of civil war."

The unprepared state of Charles and the vigorous activity of Maurice, combined with a variety of more private reasons which influenced the different powers of Germany, to produce the peace concluded in the month of August at Passau; in which, among other articles, it was stipulated that a Diet should be held within six months, to deliberate concerning the most effectual method of preventing in future all disputes in religion; that in the mean time neither the Emperor nor any other prince should upon any pretext whatever, offer injury or violence to such as adhered to the Confession of Augsburg, but allow them the free and undisturbed exercise of their religion; that the formulary of faith called the Interim, should be considered null and void; and that if the proposed Diet should not be able to terminate religious disputes, the present stipulations in behalf of the Protestants shall continue in full force and vigor.

Amidst the desolations of war, Germany was destined also to suffer the ravages of the plague, in consequence of which the universities of Wittemberg and Leipsic were dispersed; but the former re-assembled under the auspices of Melancthon at Torgau, about twenty-two miles distant. He there engaged in delivering lectures on Justin Martyr, prepared a treatise "de unione personali," which does not appear to have been ever committed to the press, and published a refutation of Osiander, in the German language. He used to say that "he was not afraid of the plague which had driven them to Torgau, but he was really apprehensive on account of plagues of another kind, which infested the country and seemed to threaten its utter ruin."

Osiander was another of those virulent adversaries of Melancthon, which the conferences and publications on the subject of the Interim had produced. He was pastor of the church at Nuremberg, but retired on that occasion to a divinity professorship at Konigsberg. His character and his opinions were marked by eccentricity. He zealously propagated sentiments respecting repentance and justification, which differed essentially from the Lutheran doctrines, and consisted in subtle distinctions which it is needless to detail. Suffice it to remark, that Stancarus, professor of Hebrew at Konigsberg, undertook to refute his statements, but was hurried by his impetuosity into opposite extremes of doctrine. Osiander maintained that the *man* Christ, as a moral agent, was obliged to obey for *himself* the divine law, and therefore could not by the imputation of his obedience obtain *righteousness* or justification for *others*. Hence he inferred that the Saviour of the world was empowered by his nature *as God*, to make expiation for our sins, and reconcile us to the offended Deity. But Stancarus totally excluded Christ's *divine* nature from all concern in the *satisfaction* he made and in the *redemption* he procured, affirming that the office of Mediator between God and man belonged to Jesus in his human nature alone. Osiander was patronized by persons of considerable rank and influence, but his opinions did not long survive him.

These discussions engaged the attention of the most eminent of the Lutheran divines, and moved the powerful pen of Melancthon. In the year 1553, he says in a letter to his friend Camerarius, "I have written on the controversy of Stancarus in a manner by far inferior and more concise than the magnitude of the subject requires, but I was not willing to irritate an angry and choleric man." To Mat-

thesius he writes, "About eight days ago the Elector of Brandenburg sent for Pomeranus and myself to examine into the controversy of Stancarus, who contends that Christ is Mediator only in his human nature. But immediately afterwards, information arrived that the Elector's son was dead and his father ill; and thus at present our journey and the examination are postponed. Nevertheless I have written my solemn declaration, that Jesus Christ is to be viewed as Mediator, as he is our High-Priest in his united natures, divine and human. St. Ambrose maintains the same sentiment. The principal arguments for this truth I purpose sending at a future time. I beg you to notice for me any evidences on this subject which you may discover in reading the ancient fathers."

His reply to Stancarus exhibits a mind in search of truth, and maintaining that dignified and unruffled tranquillity which a consciousness of possessing it ought ever to inspire. He begins in a pious and conciliatory manner, deprecating all animosity in religious parties, and stating that as great contentions frequently originate in small beginnings, it was his anxious desire to remove rather than to enflame contention. He appeals most convincingly to every part of the New Testament, in proof of the impossibility of separating the two natures of Christ in the mediatorial transactions, because the Son of God in his entire nature became Mediator, Redeemer, Saviour, King and Priest of the church. He appeals also to the concurrent opinions of Chrysostom, Irenæus, Ambrose, Jerome, and the fathers generally, upon the same subjects.

Melancthon was at this period occupied with the care of the churches and academical establishments in Misnia. To him as the most competent director in every concern of this description, applications were usually made; and the very counsellors of princes were the first to seek his valuable advice. His plans were in this, as in most other cases, adopted.

His affectionate spirit was deeply grieved by the loss of several friends during the course of the year, and by trials in his family. "Domestic afflictions," says he, "are superadded to others. My servant John, remarkable for his fidelity and virtue, is called from the present life to the heavenly church; and now my wife is so extremely ill that nature seems overpowered by disease. But I pray the Son of God to grant us his presence and preserve us with his whole church, as I have often expressed it in the following verse:—

"Te maneat semper servante Ecclesia Christe
Insertosque ipsi nos tua dextra tegat;
Tres velut in flamma testes Babylonide servas
Rex ubi præsentem te videt esse Deum.

O Saviour, may thy church unhurt remain,
And all within thy kind protection share!
Like Israel's sons amidst Chaldean flame—
The king confessing that a God was there!—

A conference being appointed in the month of March, 1551, at Naumburg, in Thuringia, for the purpose of consolidating a union and renewing the ancient friendship that subsisted between the houses of Saxony, Brandenburg and Hesse; the different theologians, with Melancthon at the head of them, were summoned to attend. John Foster, a skilful Hebraist, accompanied him from Wittemberg;—Alexander Aless, to whom he was peculiarly attached on account of his excellent spirit, polemical knowledge, and accurate discernment, was deputed to join them from the university of Leipsic; Adam Craft, from Hesse, and John Sleidan, celebrated for his history of ecclesiastical affairs, from Strasburg. From this convention he writes to Camerarius, "Like the ancient Argonauts who stuck fast upon a quicksand, so I seem to be fixed amongst the numerous perplexities of this troublesome affair. When we arrived at the Court we were directed to give our opinion upon three things, the inspection of the churches, and the preparation of a formulary, as they call it, of instruction—the constitution of councils—and concerning the affairs of the academy in Misnia. Afterwards when no one had prepared a copy of such instructions as were required, I received orders to compose it, which though done upon the spur of the occasion, was read in the assembly the next day and approved. The pastor commented upon some things respecting your council; about the new academy I have given no advice. The pastor made some observations in a very free, ingenuous manner. The third day was consumed in contention with the dean of Friburg, who attacked in the severest terms, the good old pastor respecting the Adiaphoristic controversy. I have written a reply, which is incorporated in the letters of the prince to the Duke of Prussia, who is aiming to prevent the circulation of every book, that contains any thing upon the subject of the *Baltic* controversy."

The purpose of this meeting was at length accomplished, in the renewal of that ancient treaty which subsisted between the two Electors of Saxony and Brandenburg, and the Landgrave of Hesse; and the insertion of another article which the peculiar circumstances of the times suggested, by which the respective parties agreed to adhere to the Confession of Augsburg, and to maintain it in their dominions.

Impartiality here demands a statement of the opinion of Melancthon upon those transactions at Geneva, respecting the unhappy Servetus, which have occasioned so many violent controversies. Were we to enter into a deliberate and dispassionate investigation of this affair, it would probably appear that an eagerness to criminate on the one hand, and to defend on the other, has hurried each party into extremes; the one, whose opinions have coincided with those of Servetus, have not been sufficiently disposed to make allowances for the peculiar circumstances in which the Reformers were placed, and for the strength of those conscientious, however erroneous—*deplorably* erroneous principles, which they blended with many valuable discoveries;—the other party cherishing opposite religious sentiments, have been too anxious to extenuate a crime committed against the rights of conscience, which no considerations can excuse; absurdly imagining that Calvin and truth were identical, and that to defend the reputation of the former, was essential to the vindication and glory of the latter.

The case was this. Michael Servetus, a Spaniard, and a native of Villaneuva, in Arragon, embraced the reformed religion at an early period of his life, in consequence of searching the Scriptures; but departed from the general sentiments of the Reformers on the subject of the Trinity. His zeal was considerable, and going into Germany to propagate his opinions, he published a book in 1531, entitled "de Trinitatis Erroribus," which in the ensuing year was followed by two other treatises. These writings occasioning great dissatisfaction, he removed from place to place till he settled in Paris, where he devoted himself to the study of medicine, but at the same time became involved in disputes of a theological nature with the physicians, till at length chagrined at the suppression, by act of parliament, of a book he had published, he withdrew to Lyons, and was introduced to the Archbishop of Vienna, in whose house he long resided. During several years he corresponded with Calvin the Reformer of

Geneva, but the contemptuous manner in which he treated his theological antagonist, produced at length an open rupture and a mortal antipathy. When Servetus was arrested and committed to prison at Vienna, for his publications, together with his printer, Calvin, at the desire however of the magistrates of that city, sent his letters and writings—but he was condemned for his published errors, and not as it appears in consequence of any interference of the Geneva reformer. Having escaped from prison, he fled to Geneva with the design of retiring to Naples. Here he was arrested; and, as it cannot with probability be denied, at the instigation of Calvin, who had long before intimated "if that heretic came to Geneva, he would take care that he should be capitally punished."

When tried for heresy the principal accusations against Servetus were, his having asserted that the land of Canaan was fertile, though it was unfruitful and barren—his having corrupted the Latin Bible which he was employed to correct at Lyons, by introducing trifling and impious notes of his own—and having, in the person of Calvin, defamed the doctrine that is preached, uttering all imaginable, injurious, and blasphemous words against it. Before sentence was passed, the ministers of Basle, Zurich, Bern, and Schaffhausen were consulted, who unanimously determined that he ought to be condemned to death for blasphemy and heresy. The following verdict was accordingly pronounced —"You, Michael Servetus, are condemned to be bound and led to Champel, and there fastened to a stake and burned alive, with your book, written with your hand and printed, until your body shall be reduced to ashes, and your days thus finished as an example to others who might commit the same things; and we command you, our lieutenant, to put this our sentence into execution." Thus he perished, in great agonies, on the twenty-seventh of October, 1553.

The reader must naturally feel curious to know the opinion of the amiable Melancthon on this odious transaction, and it is with the utmost pain we produce it, as expressed in a letter to Bullinger. "I have read your statement respecting the blasphemy of Servetus, and praise your piety and judgment; and am persuaded that the Council of Geneva has done right in putting to death this obstinate man, who would never have ceased his blasphemies. I am astonished that any one can be found to disapprove of this proceeding; but I have transmitted you a few papers which will sufficiently explain our sentiments." On more than one occasion he had refuted his statements by an appeal to scriptural evidence, and had he confined his hostility to the *principle*, and not by his concurrence have punished the *man*, we should have enjoyed the delightful opportunity of presenting to the reader a noble exception to the general spirit of the times. But at that period, Christians of every class and party believed that *gross religious errors were punishable by the civil magistrate*, a Popish doctrine which they had not yet renounced, and which, it is to be feared, is not even to this day, and in the most enlightened part of the world, totally exterminated from the breasts of all Protestants. Be it remembered, however, that by cherishing such a principle, in any degree, they betray the best of causes—furnish occasion for the most injurious representations of Christianity; and, instead of learning of their Master, who was "meek and lowly of heart," imitate the misguided disciples who were for calling down fire from heaven. Can any thing be more obvious than this, that it is the birthright of every human being to think for himself, that he is amenable alone to conscience and to God for his religious sentiments, and that whatever person or system attempts to legislate for the free-born soul, and coerce the faith of another, is perpetrating one of the most detestable of crimes, robbing man of his liberty and God of his authority? In such a case *submission to* MAN is *treason against* HEAVEN. Is it not truly astonishing that while the Reformers, in their separation from the church of Rome, asserted this noble principle, and were daily contending and even bleeding for it, they should so far forget themselves, even the very best of them, as to act in diametrical opposition to their own claims—to impose and to dissent from the same principle at the same time—to discard human authority in matters of religion in contending against the Romish hierarchy, and to vindicate it in establishing their own church? So inconsistent is human nature! But let Protestants aim to purify themselves from this deep stain upon their characters, which can only be removed by eternally disclaiming, not only in words but in practice, all dominion over another's faith and conscience!

JOHN FREDERIC survived to the present year the release from imprisonment which the peace of Passau had given him. He had however only been permitted to take possession of a part of his territories, and although he had laid claim to his electoral dominions upon the death of Maurice, who was shot in battle the preceding year, that usurper's brother, Augustus, a prince of considerable talents and great urbanity of manners, was chosen by the ungrateful states of Saxony to that elevated station. The death of John Frederic excited the tears of Melancthon, who ceased not to admire the virtues which not only flourished in the beams of prosperity, but which did not appear in the least degree to wither in the most adverse season of his life. He possessed an inflexible integrity of character that no changes could possibly alter, and a far distant posterity will venerate his name.

The contentions excited by the zeal of Osiander and Flacius now raged in every direction, and with such excessive violence at Nuremberg in particular, that the whole city was in a state of commotion. A most urgent application therefore was made to the Elector Augustus, to permit Melancthon, whose advice had been often sought, to repair immediately with his principal associates, Aless, Camerarius, and Pomeranus to afford every requisite assistance on the spot. The most disgraceful scenes were transacted, but the presence and judgment of these eminent commissioners after some time restored tranquillity. Melancthon drew up a short but comprehensive statement of truth, in which he displayed the most exquisite skill, combined with the most Christian spirit. He maintained truth and refuted error without indulging in the least asperity of language against his adversaries.

This affair, however, was not adjusted till the commencement of another year; but upon his return home he was infested with crowds of persons inoculated with the wildfire of Flacius, who absolutely persecuted him for several months and years. Unhappily several persons of distinction espoused his cause, and encouraged the ignorant hostility of the vulgar. They cherished a disputative pertinacity of spirit, made a man an offender for a word, perpetually stood in the attitude of defiance, filled all the shops with the most abusive publications, and denounced with unmerciful scurrility the amiable and insulted Melancthon. Flacius himself was the prime mover of these proceedings, and exerted a never-ceasing activity in the circulation of calumnious misrepresentations. In a letter to Matthesius, Melancthon very justly characterizes him as "a viper whose venom every wise man would avoid;" but the calumniator himself he addressed in the mildest terms. "Homer, in describing the contest between Ajax and Hector, represents the former as being satisfied

when the latter yields and confesses that he is vanquished; but there is no end to your criminations. Who ever acts in this manner? Who strikes a foe when he gives up the contest and throws away his weapons? Claim the victory, I yield, I contend no longer about these rites; I am chiefly solicitous that the churches live in concord and peace. I confess, indeed, that I have committed sin in this affair, and implore forgiveness of God that I did not wholly fly from these subtle disputations: but I feel myself obliged to refute the misstatements of yourself and Gallus."

On another occasion he expresses himself in the following manner: "I am not in despair on account of the cruel clamor of my enemies, who threaten not to leave me a foot of ground to stand upon in Germany; but I commit myself to the Son of God. If I am driven away alone, *I have determined to go into Palestine*, and in those lurking places where Jerome retired, by maintaining intercourse with the Son of God, to write clear statements of divine truth, and in death to recommend my soul to God." Again he says, "I am eagerly and with tranquillity of mind expecting to be banished, as I have told the princes. My adversaries declare they are resolved to accomplish their purpose, and that I shall not have a footing in Germany. I sincerely wish they would *do it quickly*, as the Son of God said to Judas. If I die, there will be a footing for me in heaven; or if I continue in the body, I shall still be associated with pious and learned men either in Germany or elsewhere. I am astonished at the folly of my enemies, who imagine they possess a ruling influence in Germany, and can terrify me with their threats."

On Melancthon in a great measure devolved "the care of all the churches;" but will any one credit the representations of his open enemies, or more injurious friends, who have carelessly propagated the notion of his abandoning the truth, after perusing the following pious and affectionate portion of a letter addressed to the pastors of the churches in the provinces of Bohemia and Lusatia?—or, indeed, will it be believed that if he had been guilty of tergiversation they would have continued to seek his advice, to value his sympathies, to confide in his wisdom, and to allow him to maintain the eminence to which public esteem and personal merit had exalted him? "Whether," he observes, "divine wisdom has appointed still greater troubles than ever existed before in this feeble and superannuated age of the world, may be doubtful; but amidst the desolation of empires, the Son of God will continue to gather an eternal church, solely by the preaching of his gospel, till the period when he will recall the dead to life. These predictions are given to encourage us to endure the sufferings allotted us, and to persevere in the labor of extending the truth in the world, which will not be in vain. It is with much grief we have heard that pure doctrine is so despised, that the pastors have been driven from their churches, and that at this moment many pious and upright men, with their wives and dear little children, are in a state of exile. We sympathize most deeply with them, with you, and with your bereaved churches, and implore the Son of God, who has said, 'I will not leave you comfortless,' to alleviate these sufferings, and to afford you all necessary assistance. You so well know the true sources of religious consolation, that we will not enlarge, but only admonish you, under present circumstances, to set your churches an example of steadfastness in tribulation, lest they should be tempted to unbelief. Nothing will be more efficacious for this purpose than a thorough knowledge of the truth, and an opposition to mere human opinions. The Papists support the most flagrant idolatry, the invocation of departed saints, and numerous absurdities originating from that monstrous sentiment: they turn the Lord's Supper into a gainful traffic, and, contrary to the design of this institution, carry about the bread in public procession to be adored. Disparaging the true doctrine of repentance, they invent a multiplicity of foolish rites, to the absolute torment of pious persons, taking away the consolation to be derived from a knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and zealously contending for numerous observances of their own invention. The people then will not surely suppose our determined opposition to these practices unnecessary. Let the principal points of doctrine be frequently inculcated, with these solemn admonitions: 'Keep yourselves from idols.'—'Though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.'—'Whosoever blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him.'" This letter is dated *February*, 1555.

The death of Justus Jonas proved an additional source of affliction at this period. He had been particularly intimate both with Luther and Melancthon, and had co-operated with the latter in several important public transactions. Jonas was a native of Northausen in Thuringia. He was profoundly skilled both in law and theology. For some years he held a pastoral charge at Wittemberg, and was a professor and rector of the university. Afterwards removing to Halle, he became extensively useful in promoting the Reformation. For a considerable time after the death of Luther he continued in the Duke of Saxony's court, and was a sympathizing companion to the sons of John Frederic in their afflictions. At last he was placed over the church in Eisfield, where he expired in peace, on the ninth of October, 1555, at the age of sixty-two.

Maximilian, king of Bohemia, levied a new tax upon the celebrity of Melancthon, by proposing to him a number of questions respecting the principal subjects that occasioned the controversies of the age; to all of which he felt himself obliged to return a circumstantial reply. This was in the year 1556, and the whole memorial was published at Leipsic, by Nicholas Selneccer, about ten years after the author's decease.

It is impossible for those who are not similarly situated fully to realize the perplexity and toil which Melancthon and his coadjutors sustained at this period. As the head of all the principal literary and ecclesiastical transactions of the age, consulted by princes, despatched upon every urgent occasion on different journeys, summoned to private conferences and public councils, necessitated to maintain an extensive correspondence, opposed, and even insulted by a violent faction, and watched as a heretic by the partizans of the Roman hierarchy, it is not surprising that he should represent himself as tormented upon the rack of incessant engagement, and absolutely distracted with writing disputations, rules and regulations, prefaces and letters.

CHAPTER XIII.

Last conference of Melancthon with the Papists at Worms—Visit to Heidelberg—Receives intelligence of his wife's death—Her epitaph—The Chronicon and other writings—Loss of friends—Melancthon's infirmities—Interesting paper assigning reasons why it is desirable to leave the world—A variety of particulars respecting his last illness and death—Epitaph by Theodore Beza—Ode—Conclusion. 1557 to 1560.

The time was now approaching when this distinguished combatant was to pass from the field of holy and honorable warfare in which he had so long "fought the good fight," to share the honors of an eternal triumph. In the year 1557, he met his Popish adversaries for the last time in a conference at Worms. The chief subject of dispute was a most

important one, meriting all the zeal and firmness with which the Reformers maintained their principles. It respected *the rule of judgment in religious concerns.* This the Papists strenuously affirmed to be *the universal consent* or *custom of the church;* and with no less ardor Melancthon and his coadjutors insisted that the only legitimate and authoritative rule was THE SACRED SCRIPTURE. Let it never be forgotten, by a grateful posterity, that however they might differ on some other points, *among themselves,* and however widely present or future generations may differ from *them* in topics, either maintained by some of them individually, or perhaps all of them collectively, they are to be applauded and venerated for holding with the most tenacious grasp of mind, and asserting with the utmost resolution of spirit, in defiance of a persecuting world, this noble principle—this *anchora sacra* of the Reformation, that THE ONLY AUTHORITY TO WHICH HUMAN REASON OUGHT IMPLICITLY TO SUBMIT, IN RELIGIOUS CONCERNS, IS THE INFALLIBLE WORD OF THE LIVING GOD!

From the conference at Worms, during a temporary suspension of the business, the Elector Palatine sent for Melancthon to Heidelberg, for the purpose of adjusting some literary arrangements—the Augustinian convent, having been converted into an academy. In this affair he was assisted by Micyllus, and other eminent scholars. The pleasure he felt in meeting his brother George at Heidelberg, and in the affectionate attentions of his celebrated son-in-law, Caspar Peucer, was painfully interrupted by the intelligence of his wife's death. His friend Joachim Camerarius, was charged to convey the melancholy tidings. Knowing the strength of his affections, he chose to defer the performance of this sad duty till the day after his arrival, when they walked together in the prince's garden; but instead of manifesting any extraordinary emotion, Melancthon, on receiving the intelligence, spoke like a man who was weaned in a great degree from the world, uttering a kind of tender farewell to his beloved Catharine, and adding "that he expected very soon to follow her." He pursued a solemn and pious strain of conversation, expressing his prophetic anticipations of the future troubles that awaited Saxony. So firmly convinced was he of the reality of his apprehensions, and so deeply affected at the dark prospect of future calamitous years, that his domestic misfortune seemed utterly absorbed in the greater importance of public affairs.

The last act of conjugal tenderness, which closed the long union of thirty-seven years, was the composition of the few following lines, to adorn the tombstone of his deceased wife:—

Proximus hic tumulus Catharinæ contegit ossa
Quæ Crappo quondam consule nata fuit
Conjugio casto fuerat quæ nupta Philippo
Ex scriptis cujus nomina nota manent.
Virtutes habuit donatas numine Christi
Matronæ Paulus quas docet esse decus.
Hic absente viro sepelivit filia corpus
Vivit, conspectu mens fruiturque Dei.

Deposited beneath this hallow'd earth
Lies CATHARINE's dust, of CRAPPIN's house by *birth;*
To PHILIP join'd by *wedlock's* sacred name—
Philip—whose writings will prolong their fame.
Virtues which Christ bestow'd adorn'd her life,
And such as Paul affirms become a wife.
Her Philip absent, mourn'd the chast'ning rod—
By filial tenderness beneath this clod
Her BODY 's plac'd;—her SOUL is fled to God!

Melancthon survived his beloved partner only about two years and six months, a period which he occupied in unremitting attention, to the duties of his academical station, and in the composition of useful works. His opponents would not allow him to retire from controversial writing, and in 1558, he replied to the accusations of Staphylus and Avius, two of the zealots of Rome.

In the same year he issued the first part of his CHRONICON, which is published complete in the fifth volume of his works by Peucer. It consists of more than seventy pages in folio, containing the great events of general history from the creation of the world, to the period of the Reformation. Like all his other compositions, it displays a great extent of reading, a remarkable capacity for judicious selection, and a disposition to use up the rich materials with which his mind was stored, in the erection of a structure, adapted both to gratify and to benefit posterity. The Chronicon was written principally as its author states for the youth in the universities; "I wish," says he, modestly, "I possessed more time and capacity, to finish up these historical narratives, but I hope that others will be stimulated by this example, to execute other more copious and better compositions."

Many writers have erroneously attributed to Melancthon, a Greek version of the Augsburg confession, transmitted in the course of the following year, under the name of Paul Dolscius, to the patriarch of Constantinople. His own words in a letter to Bordingus, sufficiently evince the mistake of this statement, while they authenticate and approve the version. "I send you a Greek version of the Augsburg Confession, which was published without my advice. However I approve the style, and have sent it to Constantinople by a man of learning, a dean of that city, who has been our guest during the whole summer. He relates that there were heretofore many churches in Asia, in Thrace and the neighboring countries, but they have been gradually diminished by oppression and bondage." During the same year, he composed his reply to a decree of the Abbot of Wurtemberg, and to some papistical scurrilities of which he grievously complains; he wrote also his judgment upon the controversy respecting the Lord's Supper, to Frederic III. Elector Palatine, which was afterwards published; and finished some other minor compositions.

During these transactions his earthly ties were gradually dissolving. Year after year robbed him of his dearest friends, thus rendering the world less desirable, and heaven more attractive. On these occasions he usually expressed himself in a pious and elevated strain. For instance, "Let us congratulate Vitus, now removed to the delightful society of the heavenly church; and be stimulated by his example to prepare for the same journey." In addition to his domestic and other bereavements he lost Micyllus, Justus Menius, and John Bugenhagen Pomeranus. The latter, was one of the most remarkable men of the age, and may be justly ranked with Luther and Melancthon, with whom he cherished a long and close friendship, and to whom he was in many respects little inferior. Originally he was a schoolmaster at Treptow, in Pomerania, and when he first saw the "Babylonish Captivity" by Luther, exclaimed, "the author of this book is the most pestilent heretic that ever infested the church of Christ;" but after examining it more seriously, and with an inquisitive mind, it wrought so entire a change of sentiment, that he said "the whole world is blind and this man alone sees the truth." When he was chosen to be minister of the great church at Wittemberg, he not only did not aim at this elevation, but was almost dragged by force out of his obscurity to possess it, and assiduously devoted himself to the duties of this eminent station, during thirty-six years. He expired in peace on

the twentieth of April, 1558, at the advanced age of seventy-three.

It is some satisfaction to find that such a man as Philip Melancthon, was not destined to spend the latter years of his life, in a state of inanimate decrepitude and half-conscious being. The flame of his genius and piety burnt with a bright and steady lustre to the last; the noon of fame seemed to shed its undeparted glories upon the evening of his earthly existence! How many have lived only to be pitied or despised, the wreck of their former selves, alike incapable of receiving or imparting either pleasure or benefit! Decays of body and infirmities of mind, have worm-eaten a fabric built of the finest materials, and once presenting to the gratified observer, a happy combination of elegance and utility. But in the present instance every thing excites surprise and veneration. A perfect maturity of the faculties and a singular capability of exertion, are apparent to the very end of his days. *Pulchrorum etiam autumnus pulcher est.* It is impossible to read some of his last letters without emotion. They breathe an exalted piety, a spirit of sympathy with the sorrows of others, and a state of preparation for that mighty change he was soon to experience. Such is his letter to Everard Roggius.

Dearest Brother—"I am a father, and not insensible or destitute of natural affection, but deeply sympathize in the calamities which befall sons and daughters. I cannot, therefore, but believe that you are painfully affected with yours; for the strongest mutual affection is implanted in the human breast between parents and children. I pray that our Lord Jesus Christ may assuage your griefs, alleviate your adversities, and preserve both you and your family. Resort to those divine sources of knowledge which are bestowed upon us, to administer consolation in trouble. God designs indeed that his church should suffer the cross, but he would not have us be overwhelmed with grief, but rather stimulated by afflictions, to call upon his name, to acquiesce, to rejoice in his dispensations. You remember the language of the prophet Isaiah, whose words are expressively rendered in the Septuagint *En thlipsei mikra e paideia son emin.* It is said to be a *little* or *short* affliction, because all the joys and sorrows of the present life are hastening to a termination. Let us then contemplate, and be constantly preparing for the everlasting society of the blessed God!.....Farewell, the sixteenth of October, the day on which, one thousand eight hundred and eighty-one years ago Demosthenes died, whom one cannot but lament for having consumed such a vigor of genius in such a useless manner, and as being *skeuos orges*, a vessel of wrath. Let us be grateful to God who has called us to nobler pursuits, and implore his Son so to rule and guide us that we may be *skeue elous*, vessels of mercy.

"From your brother, now an old man, and not far from his climacteric year 63,

"Philip Melancthon."

His last letter, chiefly because it is the last he wrote, we have thought proper to translate. It is addressed to John Aurifaber.

"Reverend sir and dearest brother—Although I heard that you were in the principality of Breslau, where I indulge the hope of enjoying some intercourse with those learned and pious men Crato, Adam, Peter Vincentius and Moreburgius, yet I write these few lines, though I am in excruciating pain from an intermitting fever, originating in a catarrh, which has troubled me for upwards of three years. You will pardon, therefore, the brevity of my letter. Feeling myself dying, I have commended your doctrine to the illustrious prince, and have written concerning the genuine and holy union of the principal churches. I commend also this doctrine to you, and implore you to receive David Voyt with kindness. I trust he will not disagree with you in opinion. Let me entreat you, if I live, to write me soon. Farewell, I return you my thanks for every kind office, and in particular for your assistance in the case of Sickius and Daucis.

"Philip Melancthon will soon be no more!"

About the same time he wrote down in two columns on a piece of paper, the reasons why it is desirable to leave the world. One of these columns contained the blessings which death would procure; namely, *first*, that you will come to the light—*secondly*, that you will see God—*thirdly*, that you will contemplate the Son of God—*fourthly*, that you will understand those admirable mysteries which you could not comprehend in the present life—*fifthly*, that you will know why we are created such as we are—*sixthly*, that you will comprehend the union of the two natures in Jesus Christ. The second column assigned two reasons for not regretting a departure from the world—*first*, because you will sin no more—*secondly*, because you will no longer be exposed to the vexations of controversy, and the rage of theologians. The following is an exact copy.

A Sinistris.	*A Dextris.*
Discedes a peccatis	Venies in lucem
Liberaberis ab ærumnis et a rabie Theologorum.	Videbis Deum
	Intuebere filium Dei
	Disces illa mira arcana quæ in hac vita intelligere non potuisti:
	Cur sic simus conditi
	Qualis sit copulatio duarum naturarum in Christo.

It appears from the testimony of the professors at Wittemberg, in their narrative of his death, that Melancthon frequently intimated his conviction that he should not survive his sixty-third year.* A few months previous to his decease, he wrote the following distich in anticipation of the approaching event:

Sic ego quotidie de lecto surgo precando
Ut mens ad mortem sit duce læta Deo.

The last journey he performed was to Leipsic, on the *sixth of April*, for the purpose of attending the annual examination of the students of divinity, who were supported by the munificence of the Elector; from which service he returned on the *ninth*. Although the season was inclement, he appeared to feel no inconvenience on his way thither, but while there he was suddenly seized during dinner with the windy cholic and diarrhœa, but the symptoms quickly disappeared. Upon his return he complained of the severity of the north wind, and the cold humidity of the atmosphere, which, he said, he had not felt so much during the whole winter: and the motion of the carriage had made him painfully sensible of the calculus which had been forming in his kidneys during several years. The night of the *seventh* of April was the first in which his last fatal disorder manifested itself. He was restless

* The interesting little volume referred to was published in the name of all the professors, and is entitled "Brevis Narratio exponens quo fine vitam in terris suam clauserit Rev. Vir D. Philippus Melancthon, una cum præcedentium proxime dierum et totius morbi quo confectus est brevi descriptione, conscripta a Professoribus Academiæ Wittebergensis, qui omnibus quæ exponuntur interfuerunt.

from want of sleep, and became afflicted by a considerable and general debility. His cough was extremely troublesome, and the fever which eventually terminated his days, began to attack him.

About six o'clock in the morning, his son-in-law, Dr. Peucer, came to see him, and immediately intimated the great alarm he felt at the situation of his father. It was determined instantly to send the melancholy information of his danger to the friend of his heart, Joachim Camerarius, with whom he had lived in the closest friendship for upwards of forty years.

After this he wrote several letters, and used the medical remedies which his son-in-law prescribed. Having been some time silent, he at length exclaimed, "If such be the will of God, I can willingly die, and I beseech him to grant me a joyful dismission;" alluding to the song of Simeon, "Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." He dwelt upon the word *peace*, and prayed for such a removal.

At *nine*, the usual hour for the commencement of his public duties in the academy, he rose from his seat, and began to prepare for going down to deliver a lecture on logic, which exercise he thought he could endure for half an hour, if he afterwards used the bath; and he felt unwilling to desist from his public labors. When he was about to set his foot upon a little stool, which he was accustomed to make use of when he washed his hands, his weakness was such that he almost fell upon his knees by the effort, which occasioning some bustle—"Ah," said he, "my lamp is almost out." Some of his friends thought it would be expedient to prevent the attendance of the students, by issuing private orders to them not to fill up their places, in order that when Melancthon went to lecture, he might be induced to return, and relinquish the idea of persevering; but he appeared so anxious that it was believed this proceeding would be likely to produce a worse effect, by agitating his mind, than the exertion itself; he was therefore allowed on this and some following days to attend in his place.

The lecture which he delivered, was upon a sentence of Gregory Nazianzen, and upon a passage of Isaiah; but his weakness rendered it impossible for him to occupy more than a quarter of an hour. Upon his return home he went into the warm bath, and after taking his dinner slept very soundly for three hours, and was so revived that a hope was entertained of his recovery. He employed himself before supper in writing, but his debility afterwards returning, the pleasing hopes that had been cherished were annihilated.

He did not yet desist from any of his usual employments, and after this period continued to dictate in the second part of his Chronicon.

On the *tenth* of April, he appeared to be totally free from his former disease, but was attacked by a semitertian fever or ague. A quantity of bile being soon expelled from his stomach by the use of medicine, he seemed relieved. Though it was of considerable importance that he should be kept quiet, yet such was his ardor, that having discovered that the Senate of the University was convened at the hour of twelve, he could not be dissuaded from attending what he believed to be his public duty. As several disputes arose, he spoke with great zeal on each subject, for the purpose of promoting peace and reconciliation.

Although extremely debilitated, yet on the morning of the *eleventh* of the month he rose early, and at six, as usual on festival days, delivered a lecture on the last prayer of the Saviour, recorded in the seventeenth chapter of the gospel of John. He divided the prayer of Christ into three parts, as embracing so many distinct objects: namely, I. That a Church might exist in the world. II. That it might be distinguished by its unity and concord. III. That his people might be heirs of that salvation and eternal life which belongs to the heavenly church. A few days previous to this, he had entreated his hearers to remember after his decease some passage or passages to which he particularly directed their attention in this last prayer; and after repeating the above division, he said impressively, "I am a dying man, and these are the three subjects for intercession with God which I leave to my children and their little ones—that they may form a part of his church, and worship him aright—that they may be one in him, and live in harmony with each other—and that they may be fellow-heirs of eternal life!"

On the *twelfth* of April, 1560, he delivered his final lecture on the words of the prophet Isaiah, "Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" Isaiah liii. 1. On the same day he wrote the following lines, which are obviously but the commencement of a hymn which his weakness rendered him incapable of finishing.

Æterno genitore nate Christe
Orator patris ex sinu verendi
Vocem Evangelii ferens suavem
Qua credentibus exhibes potenter
Vitam justiciamque sempiternam
Et qui sanguine nos tuo redemptos
Exaudis, reputas facisque justos
Ostendisque piis unum parentem
Nostras Christe semper doceto mentes
Ac in pectora gratiæ arrabonem
Nostra effundito Spiritum moventem
Casta incendia et invocationem:
Fac pars agminis ut tui per omne
Ævum simus, alacriterque semper
Æterni Patris et tuas sonemus
Laudes———

The worthy professors of Wittemberg relate with great seriousness, that between nine and ten the same night several persons of credibility affirmed, that they saw in the air some remarkable appearances of rods and scourges; upon which Melancthon, who is known to have been addicted to superstitious apprehensions, and to have been deeply impressed with the expectation of approaching calamities to his country, remarked, "That they were evidently ominous of impending punishments; but as it was *rods*, such as those with which parents correct their children, and not *swords* they saw, they might expect paternal chastisements, and not those destructive ones which were inflicted upon enemies."

During the night he enjoyed a comfortable repose, and was heard to chaunt in his sleep, in the manner in which the same words were usually repeated in public, "With desire have I desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer." Luke xxii. 15. He rose at three in the morning, and applied himself to complete his Chronicon. But from this period he rapidly declined: still anxious however to persevere to the last in the assiduous discharge of his academical duties, two days afterwards, on the fourteenth of the same month, he would have attempted to deliver another public lecture, had he not been prevented by the urgent persuasions of his friend Camerarius, who come from Leipsic to pay him all the attention which affectionate friendship could dictate.

He even put on his Professor's gown, and would have crept to the lecture-room to have delivered a discourse which he meditated on some portion of the evangelical history, but being informed by his

son-in-law that the students were not assembled, he desisted from his purpose. The fact was, after having crowded to hear him, they were dispersed by a proclamation which his friends, unknown to himself, had affixed to the door, stating his incapacity to attend.

His mind was in a very cheerful state, and he often betrayed his characteristic humor. He spoke of death with composure, and of his friend Pomeranus, who had died about two years before. He said that he dreaded nothing so much as becoming a useless cumberer of the ground, and prayed that if his life were protracted, he might be serviceable to the youth under his care, and to the church of Jesus Christ.

On the *fifteenth* he conversed much with Camerarius on the language of Paul, which he appropriated; "I have a desire to depart, and to be with Christ." He criticised upon the Greek terms, which, he said, ought to be rendered, "Having a desire to remove, pass on, or set about proceeding in the journey:" that is, to go from this life of toil and wretchedness to the blessed rest of heaven.

When Camerarius thought of taking a final leave of him on the *sixteenth*, he said, "My dear Doctor Joachim, we have been joined in the bond of friendship forty years, a friendship mutually sincere and affectionate. We have been helpers of each other with disinterested kindness in our respective stations and employments as teachers of youth, and I trust our labors have been useful; and though it be the will of God that I die, our friendship shall be perpetuated and cultivated in another world."

Camerarius, however, determined to remain a little longer with his departing friend, and accordingly disregarded, during this interesting interval, the claims both of his public and private affairs. Melancthon continued to manifest great cheerfulness, but if it were at any time disturbed, his distress appeared to arise rather from the sympathy he felt with the suffering church, whenever its trials were reported to him, than from even the acute paroxysms of his disease. His friends had conversed with him on this subject during the evening repast, but he afterwards enjoyed a calm night. In his sleep, he said, he had dreamt the words of Paul, which were forcibly impressed upon his mind, and afforded him much consolation, "If God be for us, who can be against us."

Early in the morning of the *seventeenth*, Camerarius took his final leave. Melancthon had finished some letters to the Duke of Prussia, and to several friends, which he had been preparing during the whole of his illness, and expressed his intention of writing more but for the interdiction of his physician. When Camerarius bid him farewell—with a last and affectionate benediction, he replied, "Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who sitteth at the right hand of the Father, and giveth gifts to men, preserve you and yours and all of us!"

Soon afterwards, having received information that the Roman Pontiff was meditating a general Council, he said he would rather die than attend it, for it was easy to foresee both the dissensions it would occasion, and the inutility of its meeting. Feeling the pressure of increasing pain, and infirmity, he said, "O Lord, make an end."

On the *eighteenth* his bed was removed, by his own desire, into the library, which he had continually frequented during his illness, upon which occasion, he said with great cheerfulness, as he was placed upon it, "This may be called, I think, my *travelling couch*—if, (alluding to the criticism before mentioned,) I should *remove* in it." While several friends were standing about his bed, he said, "By the blessing of God I have now no particular domestic anxieties, for with respect to my grandchildren, whom I tenderly love, and who are now before my eyes, I am comforted to think they are in the hands of pious and beloved parents, who will be solicitous for their welfare, as much as I could ever be: but I feel for the state of public affairs, especially for the church of Christ in this cavilling and wicked age. Through the goodness of God, however, our doctrine is made public." A little afterwards he addressed some present, "God bestows talents on our youth; do you see that they use them aright." In the course of the same day, seeing one of his grandchildren near him, "Dear child," said he, "I have loved you most affectionately: see that you reverence your parents, and always endeavor to please *them*, and fear *God*, who will never forsake you. I pray you may share his constant regard and benediction." He spoke in similar terms of tenderness and piety to all the younger branches of his family, who were deeply sensible of his approaching departure.

On the same day, after discoursing with his son-in-law upon all his private affairs, and having in vain searched for the will he had formerly written, containing an explanation of some of the principal articles of his faith, which he was desirous of transmitting to posterity, he attempted to compose another, which increasing weakness would not allow him to finish. It began thus: "In the year 1560, on the eighteenth day of April, I write this will briefly, according to the best of those remaining abilities which God vouchsafes me in my present illness. I have twice before written the confession of my faith, and gratitude to God and our Lord Jesus Christ, but these papers are missing; nevertheless, I wish my confession to be considered an answer to whatever relates to the Bavarian articles, in opposition to the errors of the Papists, the Anabaptists, the followers of Flacius, and others."

After this he conferred with his son-in-law upon a diversity of subjects relative to the interests of the university, and expressed his wish that Peucer might be his successor in that institution.

Letters having been transmitted to him from Frankfort relative to the persecutions which at this period raged in France, he declared "that his bodily disease was not comparable to the grief of his mind, on account of the miseries which the church of Christ suffered."

The *nineteenth of April* was the last day of his mortal existence. After the usual medical inquiries of the morning, he adverted again to the calamitous state of the church of Christ, but intimated his hope that the genuine doctrine of the gospel would ultimately prevail, exclaiming, "If God be for us, who can be against us." After this he presented fervent supplications to heaven, mingled with groanings, for the welfare of the church. In the intervals of sleep he conversed principally upon this subject with several of his visiting friends, amongst whom were the pastor and other officers of the church, and the professors of the university.

Soon after eight in the morning, awaking from a tranquil sleep, he distinctly, though with a feeble voice repeated a form of prayer which he had written for his own daily use, and which was as follows:

"Almighty, omnipotent, ever-living and true God, Creator of heaven and earth and men, together with thy co-eternal Son our Lord Jesus Christ, who was crucified for us and rose again, and thy Holy, true, living, and pure Spirit; who art wise, good, faithful, merciful, just, the dispenser of life and of truth, independent, holy—and our Redeemer; who hast said thou willest not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should return unto thee and live—and hast promised, 'Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will hear thee.' I confess myself before thy footstool, a most miserable sinner and offender against thee in a great variety of respects,

on which account I mourn with my very heart and implore thy mercy for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord, who was crucified and rose again, seeking the remission of all my sins, and justification before thee, by and through thy son Jesus Christ, thy eternal word, and image, wonderful and inexpressible in counsel, infinite in wisdom and goodness; and that thou wouldst sanctify me by thy true, living, pure, and Holy Spirit. May I truly acknowledge and firmly believe in thee, obey thee, give thanks to thee, fear thee, invoke thee, serve thee, and through grace be admitted to thy presence in eternity, the almighty and only true God, Creator of heaven and earth and men, the everlasting Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the presence of Jesus Christ thy Son, thy eternal word and image, and the holy, true, living and pure Spirit, the comforter. In thee have I hoped, O Lord: let me never be confounded: in thy righteousness deliver me. Make me righteous, and bring me unto life eternal: thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth. Keep and overrule our churches, our government, and this academy, and bestow upon us a salutary peace and government. Rule and protect our princes. Cherish thy church, gather and preserve it in these provinces, sanctify and unite thy people by thy holy Spirit, that we may be one in thee, in the true knowledge and worship of thy Son Jesus Christ, by and through him thy eternal Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who was crucified for us and raised again. Amen.

"Almighty and eternal Lord Jesus Christ, the son of God, who art the eternal word and image of the eternal Father, our Mediator and Intercessor, crucified for us and raised again, I give thee most hearty thanks that thou didst assume humanity, and art become my Redeemer, and having suffered and risen again in human nature, dost intercede on my behalf. I beseech thee regard and have mercy on me, for I am poor and defenceless. By thy Holy Spirit increase the light of faith in me, and, weak as I am, sustain, rule, protect, and save me. In thee, O Lord, have I hoped, let me never be confounded.

"Almighty and Holy Spirit, the comforter, pure, living, true—illuminate, govern, sanctify me, and confirm my heart and mind, in the faith, and in all genuine consolation; preserve and rule over me, that, dwelling in the house of the Lord, all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, I may be and remain for ever in the temple of God, and praise him with a joyful spirit, and in union with all the heavenly church. Amen."

An interval of repose having elapsed after repeating this prayer, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and turning to his son-in-law said, "I have been in the power of death, but the Lord has graciously delivered me." This was supposed to refer to some deep conflicts of mind, as he repeated the expression to others. When some of the bystanders said, "There is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus," he soon added, "Christ is made to us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." "Let him that glorieth glory in the Lord;" and often repeated, "Lord have mercy upon me." After this he took a little refreshment for the last time, and though he attempted to proceed with the testamentary paper he had begun the preceding day, he soon found it impossible to support such an effort, but signified his acquiescence in the divine disposal.

The coldness of death was now creeping over him, but his mental faculties continued unimpaired to the very last breath of mortal existence. Having expressed a wish to hear some passages from the Old and New Testaments, his ministerial attendants read the twenty-fourth, twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth Psalms, the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, the seventh chapter of John, the fifth of the Romans, and many other passages. The declaration of John respecting the Son of God, he said was perpetually in his mind, "the world knew him not..... but as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name."

In addition to the passages of Scripture already mentioned, he frequently solaced himself with the following, "God so loved the world that he sent his only begotten Son into the world, that whosoever believeth on him might not perish, but have everlasting life;" "Whoso seeth the Son and believeth on him hath eternal life;" "Being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ;" and expressed the great consolation they afforded his mind. He earnestly exhorted his son-in-law to the study of peace, and whenever the prevailing religious contentions were mentioned, he would continually reply in the language of the son of Jesse, "Let them curse, but bless thou," and "my soul hath dwelt with him that hateth peace. I am for peace, but when I speak they are for war."

In the afternoon, another paper was written to the students by the professors, excusing their non-attendance to the usual duties of the day on account of Melancthon's dangerous situation, with which they deeply sympathized, and entreating their united prayers during the usual hours of study on his behalf; for they considered it impossible he should be able long to struggle with his disease, unless nature were divinely assisted and supported. It may easily be believed that this intimation made a powerful impression throughout the university, and that all the passages leading to the house of this beloved tutor, became crowded with anxious inquirers.

Upon being asked by his son-in-law if he would have any thing else, he replied in these emphatic words, "ALIUD NIHIL—NISI CŒLUM." NOTHING ELSE —BUT HEAVEN! and desired that he might not be any further interrupted. Soon afterwards, he made a similar request, entreating those around him who were endeavoring with officious kindness to adjust his clothes, "not to disturb his delightful repose." After some time, his friends united with the minister present in solemn prayer, and several passages in Scripture, in which he was known always to have expressed peculiar pleasure, were read, such as "Let not your heart be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my father's house, are many mansions." "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me;" particularly the fifth of the Romans, and the triumphant close of the eighth chapter, commencing "If God be for us, who can be against us." Many other parts of Scripture were recited, and the last word he uttered was the German particle of affirmation *Ia*, in reply to Vitus Winshemius, who had inquired if he understood him while reading. The last motion which his friends who surrounded him to the number of at least twenty, could discern, was a slight motion of the countenance which was peculiar to him when deeply affected with religious joy!—"Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace!"

At length, "in the midst of solemn vows and supplications," at a quarter of an hour before seven o'clock in the evening, of the nineteenth of April, one thousand five hundred and sixty, at the age of sixty-three years, two months and three days, he gently breathed his last. No distractions of mind, no foreboding terrors of conscience agitated this attractive scene. His chamber was "privileged beyond the common walks of virtuous life—quite in the verge of heaven"—and he expired like a

wave scarcely curling to the evening zephyr of an unclouded summer sky, and gently rippling to the shore. It was a "DEPARTURE"—a "SLEEP"—"the earthly house of this tabernacle was DISSOLVED!" 2 Cor. v. 1.

Surely then, "such a pious and tranquil removal from a toilsome and afflictive life, ought to be a subject of joy, rather than of lamentation, and each of us should entreat God, that in the possession of a similar peace of conscience, firm faith, acknowledgment of the truth and ardent devotion of mind, he would conduct us from our present imprisonment to his eternal presence."

Information of this event was immediately transmitted to the Elector, and means were adopted to bury him with suitable circumstances of respect. To gratify the anxious crowds who were desirous of seeing the body of this venerable person, the public were permitted for a day and a half after his decease to inspect his mortal remains; and of the hundreds who availed themselves of the opportunity, none could resist bestowing an abundant tribute of tears upon his beloved memory. Strangers who had never seen him while living, pressed to take a view of the yet undeparted symmetry of his amiable countenance, and all who came, were desirous of obtaining a pen, a piece of paper, however small, on which he had written, or in short any thing he had used, however insignificant in itself, which was scattered on the floor of the library.

His remains were placed in a leaden coffin, and deposited close to the body of Martin Luther—"lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death, they were not divided." A long Latin inscription was written on the coffin, containing a chronological notice of the principal circumstances of his life. Some of the professors in the university attended in funeral robes to convey the body to the parochial church, where it was placed before the altar, and after the usual ceremonies and psalms, Paul Eberus, pastor of the church at Wittemberg, delivered a funeral discourse; after which, the body being removed into the centre of the church, Doctor Vitus Winshemius pronounced an oration in Latin. The crowd of students, citizens, strangers, and persons of every class, attracted together to witness these solemnities, was never exceeded on any occasion within the memory of the spectators. Among the rest, were several of the professors from the university of Leipsic, and many of the nobility, pastors of churches, and others, from a large vicinity.

Here our labors are closed. The reader will accept of this volume as a faithful portrait of Melancthon's character; but before it is parted with, it is due to the distinguished individual whose likeness we have endeavored to impress upon these pages, to relate two circumstances as a finish to the picture: the one is illustrative of his fame, the other of his piety.

When Sabinus, his son-in-law, visited Italy, he carried a letter of introduction from Melancthon to the celebrated Cardinal Bembo; the consequence of which was an invitation to dinner. Among a variety of questions, the three following are particularly mentioned. The cardinal inquired "what was Melancthon's salary—what the number of his hearers—and what his opinion respecting the resurrection and a future state?"—To the first question, Sabinus replied, that "his salary was about three hundred florins," upon which, the cardinal exclaimed, "Ungrateful Germany! to estimate at no higher a price so many and such labors of so great a man!" His reply to the second question was, "that he had usually fifteen hundred hearers." To this the cardinal answered, "I cannot believe it, because I do not know a university in Europe, excepting that of Paris, in which one professor has so many scholars." To the third question, Sabinus replied, "that Melancthon's works were a sufficient proof of his belief in both those articles." The cardinal said, "I should think him a wiser man if he did not believe them."

When in consequence of the tyranny of queen Mary, thousands of Puritans fled from England into Germany, Switzerland, and France, the Lutherans reproached them as *the Devil's Martyrs*. Melancthon contended strenuously against these calumniators, and expressed his abhorrence at such language being applied to a class of men like Latimer and others with whom he was well acquainted.

It is painful to reflect that an event which usually checks the hostile feelings of the most determined enemies, did not, however, subdue the animosity of those of Melancthon. A persecuting demon seemed to have taken an entire possession of them, for even after his decease, they shot the envenomed arrows of malignity at his character, and borrowed the vociferous tongue of calumny to blast his fame: but in vain to *him*—he had reached that peaceful asylum so long anticipated, where "the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest!"

From a considerable collection of Greek and Latin eulogies and epitaphs, with which he used to predict that the poets would honor his memory, the following, by Theodore Beza, is selected as a sufficient and very beautiful specimen:—

Et tu igitur tandem tumuli sub mole repostus
Die o Philippe, nunc jaces.
Et quam invidisti vivus tibi tute quietem,
Cunctis qietem dum paras,
Ipsa tibi cura et sancti peperere labores,
Carum o bonis cunctis caput!
At tu funde rosas, funde isti lilia tellus,
Ut lilia inter et rosas,
Quo nil candidius fuit et nil suavius unquam,
Recubet Melancthon molliter.
Et gravie huic ut sis, caveas juvenisve senexve,
Qui nemini vixit gravis.

Here then, MELANCTHON, lies thy honor'd head
Low in the grave amongst the mould'ring dead!
In life, 'twas thine to make all others blest,
But to thyself denying peace and rest;
Thine was the holy toil, the anxious tear,
Dear Philip—to the good for ever dear!—
O earth! let lilies here profusely spring,
And roses all around their odours fling!
For rose and lily each their glories bend,
The sweet, the fair, in our departed friend!
Soft let him sleep and none disturb his rest,
None *he* disturb'd while living—none oppress

ODE TO PHILIP MELANCTHON

Oh! who would envy those who die
Victims on ambition's shrine!
Though idiot man may rank them high,
And to the slain in victory,
Pay honors half divine;
To feel this heaving fluttering breath,
Still'd by the lightest touch of death,
The happier lot be mine!
I would not, that the murdering brand,
Were the last weapon in my hand.
He, of whom these pages tell,
He, a soldier too—of truth,
He, a hero from his youth;
How delightfully he fell!
Not in the crash, and din, and flood,
Of execrations, groans, and blood,
Rivetting fetters on the good!—
But happily and well.

No song of triumph sounds his fall,
  No march of death salutes his bier,
But tribute sweeter far than all,
  The sainted sigh, the orphan tear!
Yet mourn not, ye who stand around,
  Bid not time less swiftly roll,
What though shade the prospect bound;
He a brighter world has found,
  Death is the birth-day of the soul.

Witness! (for ye saw him die)
Heard you complaint, or groan, or sigh?—
  Or if one sigh breath'd o'er his breast,—
As gentle airs when days of summer close,
Breathe, over wearied nature still repose,
  And lull a lovely evening to rest:
It whisper'd,—"All within is peace,
The storm is o'er, and troubles cease."

His sun went down in cloudless skies,
Assur'd upon the morn to rise,
  In lovelier array,
But not like earth's declining light
To vanish back again to-night:
The zenith where he now shall glow
No bound, no setting beam can know.
Without, or cloud or shade of wo,
  Is that eternal day.

History will not write his name,
Upon the *crimson* roll of fame;
But religion, meeker maid,
  Mark him in her tablet fair;
And, when million names shall fade,
  He will stand recorded there!

THE END.

MEMOIRS

OF THE LATE

REV. SAMUEL PEARCE, A.M.

WITH

EXTRACTS FROM SOME OF HIS

MOST INTERESTING LETTERS.

BY ANDREW FULLER D. D.

Oh Jonathan, thou wast slain upon thy high places. I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan !.....DAVID.

NEW-YORK:

THOMAS GEORGE, JR. 162 NASSAU STREET.

1834.

INTRODUCTION.

It was observed by this excellent man, during his last affliction, that he never till then gained any personal instruction from our Lord's telling Peter by *what death* he should glorify God. To die by a consumption, had used to be an object of dread to him. But, "Oh my Lord, (said he,) if by *this death* I can most GLORIFY THEE, I prefer it to all others." The lingering death of the cross, by which our Saviour himself expired, afforded him an opportunity of uttering some of the most affecting sentences which are left on sacred record. And to the lingering death of this his honored servant, we are indebted for a considerable part of the materials which appear in these Memoirs. Had he been taken away suddenly, there had been no opportunity for him to have expressed his sentiments and feelings in the manner he has now done in letters to his friends. While in health, his hands were full of labor, and consequently his letters were written mostly upon the spur of occasion; and related principally to business, or to things which would be less interesting to Christians in general. It is true, even in them it was his manner to drop a few sentiments, towards the close, of an experimental kind; and many of these hints will be interspersed in this brief account of him. But it was during his affliction, when, being laid aside nearly a year, and obliged to desist from all public concerns, that he gave scope to the feelings of his heart. Here, standing as on an eminence, he reviewed his life, re-examined the ground of his hope, and anticipated the crown which awaited him, with a joy truly *unspeakable and full of glory.*

Like Elijah, he has left the *chariot of Israel*, and ascended as in a *chariot of fire;* but not without having first communicated of his eminently Christian spirit. Oh that a double portion of it may rest upon us!

MEMOIRS OF REV. SAMUEL PEARCE.

CHAPTER I.

His Parentage, Conversion, Call to the Ministry, and Settlement at Birmingham.

Mr. Samuel Pearce was born at Plymouth, on July 20th, 1766. His father, who survives him, is a respectable silversmith, and has been many years a deacon of the Baptist church in that place.

When a child, he lived with his grandfather, who was very fond of him, and endeavored to impress his mind with the principles of religion. At about eight or nine years of age, he came home to his father with a view of learning his business. As he advanced in life, his evil propensities, as he has said, began to ripen; and forming connections with several vicious school-fellows, he became more and more corrupted. So greatly was his heart, at this time, set in him to do evil, that had it not been for the restraining goodness of God, which somehow, he knew not how, preserved him in most instances from carrying his wicked inclinations into practice, he supposed he should have been utterly ruined.

At times he was under strong convictions, which rendered him miserable; but at other times they subsided; and then he would return with eagerness to his sinful pursuits. When about fifteen years old, he was sent by his father to inquire after the welfare of a person in the neighborhood, in dying circumstances, who (though before his departure he was in a happy state of mind, yet) at that time, was sinking into deep despair. While in the room of the dying man, he heard him cry out with inexpressible agony of spirit, "I am damned for ever!" These awful words pierced his soul; and he felt a resolution at the time to serve the Lord: but the impression soon wore off, and he again returned to folly.

When about sixteen years of age, it pleased God effectually to turn him to himself. A sermon delivered by Mr. Birt, who was then co-pastor with Mr. Gibbs, of the Baptist church at Plymouth, was the first mean of impressing his heart with a sense of his lost condition, and of directing him to the gospel remedy. The change in him appears to have been sudden, but effectual; and the recollection of his former vicious propensities, though a source of bitterness, yet furnished a strong evidence of its being the work of God. "I believe," he says, "few conversions were more joyful. The change produced in my views, feelings, and conduct, was so evident to myself, that I could no more doubt of its being from God, than of my existence. I had the witness in myself, and was filled with peace and joy unspeakable."

His feelings being naturally strong, and receiving a new direction, he entered into religion with all his heart; but not having known the devices of Satan, his soul was entangled by its own ardor, and he was thrown into great perplexity. Having read Doddridge's *Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul*, he determined formally to dedicate himself to the Lord, in a manner recommended in the seventeenth chapter of that work. The form of a covenant, as there drawn up, he also adopted as his own; and that he might bind himself in the most solemn and affecting manner, *signed it with his blood.* But afterwards failing in his engagements, he was plunged into dreadful perplexity, and almost into despair. On a review of his covenant, he seems to have accused himself of a pharisaical reliance upon the strength of his own resolutions; and therefore, taking the paper to the top of his father's house, he tore it into small pieces, and threw it from him to be scattered by the wind. He did not, however, consider his obligation to be the Lord's, as hereby nullified; but feeling more suspicion of himself, he depended upon *the blood of the cross.*

After this, he was baptized, and became a member of the Baptist church at Plymouth, the ministers and members of which, in a few years, perceived in him talents for public work. Being solicited by both his pastors, he exercised as a probationer; and receiving a unanimous call from the church, entered on the work of the ministry in November, 1786. Soon after this, he went to the academy at Bristol, then under the superintendence of Dr. Caleb Evans.

Mr. Birt, now pastor of the Baptist church in the square, Plymouth Dock, in a letter to the compiler of these memoirs, thus speaks of him:—"Though he was, so far as I know, the very first fruits of my ministry, on my coming hither, and though our friendship and affection for each other were great and constant, yet previous to his going to Bristol, I had but few opportunities of conversing with him, or of making particular observations on him. All who best knew him, however, will remember, and must tenderly speak of his loving deportment; and those who attended the conferences with him, soon received the most impressive intimations of his future eminence as a minister of our Lord Jesus Christ."

"Very few," adds Mr. Birt, "have entered upon, and gone through their religious profession with more exalted piety, or warmer zeal, than Samuel Pearce; and as few have exceeded him in the possession and display of that *charity* which 'suffereth long, and is kind, that envieth not, that vaunteth not itself, and is not puffed up, that doth not behave itself unseemly, that seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, that beareth all things, believeth all things, endureth all things.' But why should I say this to you? You knew him yourself."

While at the academy, he was much distinguished by the amiableness of his spirit and behavior. It is sometimes observable that where the talents of a young man are admired by his friends, and his early efforts flattered by crowded auditories, effects have been produced which have proved fatal to his future respectability and usefulness. But this was not the case with Mr. Pearce. Amidst the tide of popularity, which even at that early period attended his ministerial exercises, his tutors have more than once remarked that he never appeared to them to be in the least elated, or to have neglected his proper studies; but was uniformly the serious, industrious, docile, modest, and unassuming young man.

Towards the latter end of 1789, he came to the church in Cannon street, Birmingham, to whom he was recommended by Mr. Hall, now of Cambridge, at that time one of his tutors. After preaching to them awhile on approbation, he was chosen to be their pastor. His ordination was in August, 1790. Dr. Evans gave the charge, and the late Mr. Robert Hall, of Arnsby, delivered an address to the church on the occasion. In the year 1791, he married Miss Sarah Hopkins, daughter of Mr. Joshua Hopkins, of Alcester: a connection which appears to have been all along a source of great enjoyment to him. The following lines addressed to Mrs. Pearce, when he was on a journey, a little more than a year after their marriage, seem to be no more than a common letter; yet they show, not only the tenderness of his

affection, but his heavenly mindedness, his gentle manner of persuading, and how every argument was fetched from religion, and every incident improved for introducing it:—

Chipping Norton, August 15, 1792.

"I believe, on retrospection, that I have hitherto anticipated the proposed time of my return, rather than delayed the interview with my dear Sarah for an hour. But what shall I say my love now, to reconcile you to my procrastinating my return for several days more? Why, I will say, it appears I am called of God; and I trust the piety of both of us will submit and say, *Thy will be done.*

"You have no doubt perused Mr. Ryland's letter to me, wherein I find he solicits an exchange. The reason he assigns is so obviously important, that a much greater sacrifice than we are called to make, should not be withheld to accomplish it. I therefore propose, God willing, to spend the next Lord's day at Northampton. I thought of taking tea with you this evening:—*that* would have been highly gratifying to us both; but it must be our meat and drink to do and submit to the will of our heavenly Father. All is good that comes from him, and all is done right which is done in obedience to him. Oh to be perfectly resigned to his disposal—how good is it! May you, my dearest Sarah, and myself, daily prove the sweetness of this pious frame of soul: then all our duties will be sweet, all our trials will be light, all our pleasures will be pure, and all our hopes sanctified.

"This evening I hope to be at Northampton. Let your prayers assist my efforts on the ensuing Sabbath. You will, I trust, find in Mr. R. a ship richly laden with spiritual treasures. Oh for more supplies from the exhaustless mines of grace!

"S. P."

The soul of Mr. Pearce was formed for friendship: it was natural, therefore, to suppose, that while engaging in the pursuit of his studies at the academy, he would contract religious intimacies with some of his brethren; and it is worthy of notice, that the grand cement of his friendship was *kindred piety.* In the two following letters, addressed to his friend, Mr. Steadman, the reader will perceive the justness of this remark, as well as the encouraging prospects which soon attended his labors at Birmingham:—

May 9, 1792.

My very dear brother—"You live so remote that I can hear nothing of your prosperity at Broughton. I hope you are settled with a comfortable people, and that you enjoy much of your Master's presence, both in the study and the pulpit. For my part, I have nothing to lament but an insensible, ungrateful heart, and that is sufficient cause for lamentation. This, only this, bows me down; and under this pressure I am ready to adopt the words I preached from last evening:—*Oh that I had wings like a dove, for then would I fly away and be at rest!*

"As a people, we are generally united; I believe more so than most churches of the same dimensions. Our number of members is about two hundred and ninety-five, between forty and fifty of whom have joined us since I saw you, and most of them I have the happiness of considering as my children in the faith. There is still a crying out amongst us after salvation; and still, through much grace, it is my happiness to point them to the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world.

"In preaching, I have often peculiar liberty; at other times barren. I suppose my experience is like that of most of my brethren: but I am not weary of my work. I hope still that I am willing to spend and be spent, so that I may win souls to Christ, and finish my course with joy; but I want more heart religion: I want a more habitual sense of the divine presence; I want to walk with God as Enoch walked. There is nothing that grieves me so much, or brings so much darkness on my soul, as my little spirituality, and frequent wanderings in secret prayer. I cannot neglect the duty; but it is seldom that I enjoy it.

'Ye that love the Lord indeed
Tell me, is it so with you?'

When I come to the house of God, I pray and preach with freedom. Then I think the presence of the people seems to weigh more with me than the presence of God, and deem myself a hypocrite, almost ready to leave my pulpit, for some more pious preacher. But the Lord does own the word; and again I say, if I go to hell myself, I will do what I can to keep others from going thither; and so in the strength of the Lord I will.

"An observation once made to me, helps to support me above water:—'If you did not plough in your closet, you would not reap in the pulpit.' And again I think the Lord *dwelleth in Zion*, and loveth it *more* than the dwellings of Jacob. S. P."

Feb. 1, 1793.

"The pleasure which your friendly epistle gave me, rises beyond expression; and it is one of the first wishes of my heart ever to live in your valued friendship. Accept this, and my former letters, my dear brother, as sufficient evidences of my ardent wishes to preserve by correspondence, that mutual remembrance of each other, which on my part will ever be pleasurable, and on yours, I hope, never painful.

"But ah, how soon may we be rendered incapable of such an intercourse! When I left Bristol, I left it with regret. I was sorry to leave my studies to embark (inexperienced as I am) on the tempestuous ocean of public life, where the high blowing winds, and rude and noisy billows, must more or less inevitably annoy the trembling voyager. Nor did it make a small addition to my pain, that I was to part with so many of my dear companions, with whom I had spent so many happy hours, either in furnishing or unburthening the mind. I need not say, among the first of these I considered Josiah Evans. But ah, my friend, we shall see his face no more! Through divine grace I hope we shall go to him, but he will not return to us. 'He wasted away, he gave up the ghost, and where is he?' I was prepared for the news, because I expected it. The last time I heard directly from him, was by a very serious and affectionate letter, which I received, I think, last September. To it I replied; but received no answer. I conjectured, I feared; and now my conjectures and fears are all realized. Dear departed youth! thy memory will ever be grateful to this affectionate breast. May thy amiable qualities live again in thy surviving friend, that to the latest period of his life he may thank God for the friendship of Josiah Evans.

"I assure you, my dear Steadman, I feel, keenly feel the force of the sentiment, which Blair thus elegantly expresses—

'Of joys departed ne'er to be recall'd,
How painful the remembrance!'

"But I sorrow not as one without hope. I have a two-fold hope: I hope he is now among the spirits of the just made perfect, and that he will be of the blessed and holy number who have part in the first resurrection: and I hope also, through the same rich, free, sovereign, almighty, matchless grace, to join the number too. Pleasing thought! Unite to divide no more!

"I preached last night from Rev. xxi. 6: 'I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the

water of life freely.' I took occasion to expound the former part of the chapter, and found therein a pleasure inexpressible; especially when speaking from the first verse—'And there was no more sea.' The first idea which presented itself to me was this —*there shall be no bar to intercourse.* Whether the thought be just or not, I leave with you and my hearers to determine: But I found happy liberty in illustrating it. What is it that separates one nation, and one part of the globe from another? Is it not the sea? Are not Christians, though all of one family, the common father of which is God, separated by this sea, or that river, or the other stream below? Yes; but they are one family still. *There* shall be none of these obstructions to communion, of these bars to intercourse; nothing to divide their affections or disunite their praise for ever. Forgive my freedoms, I am writing to a friend, to a brother.

"S. P."

There are few, if any, thinking men, but who at some seasons, have had their minds perplexed with regard to religious principles, even those which are of the greatest importance. In the end, however, where the heart is right, they commonly issue in a more decided attachment to the truth. Thus it was with Mr. Pearce. In another part of the above letter, he thus writes to his friend Steadman:—"I have since I saw you, been much perplexed about some doctrinal points, both Arminian and Socinian, I believe through reading very attentively, but without sufficient dependence on the Spirit of truth, several controversies on those subjects; particularly the writings of Whitby, Priestly, and others. Indeed, had the state of mind I was in about ten weeks since continued, I should have been incapable of preaching with comfort at all. But in the mount of the Lord will he be seen. Just as I thought of giving up, he who hath the hearts of all men in his hand, and turneth them as the rivers of water are turned, was pleased, by a merciful though afflicting providence, to set me at a happy liberty.

"I was violently seized with a disorder very rife here, and which carried off many, supposed to be an inflammation in the bowels. One Sabbath evening I felt such alarming symptoms, that I did not expect to see the Monday morning. In these circumstances I realized the feelings of a dying man. My mind had been so accustomed to reflect on virtue and moral goodness, that the first thing I attempted, was a survey of my own conduct; my diligence and faithfulness in the ministry, my unspotted life, &c. &c. But ah! vain props these for dying men to rest on! Such heart sins, such corruptions and evil propensities recurred to my mind, that if ever I knew the moment when I felt my own righteousness to be like loathsome and filthy rags, it was then. And where should I, where could I, where did I flee, but to Him whose glory and grace I had been of late degrading, at least in my thoughts?—Yes, there I saw peace for guilty consciences, was to be *alone* obtained through an almighty Saviour. And O! wonderful to tell, I again came to him; nor was I sent away without the blessing. I found him full of all compassion, ready to receive the most ungrateful of men.

'O! to grace how great a debtor
Daily I'm constrained to be.'

Thus, my dear brother, was the snare broken, and thus I escaped.

'A debtor to mercy alone,
Of covenant mercy I sing'

Join with me in praising Him, who remembered me in my low estate, because his mercy endureth for ever. Yet this is among the *all things.* I have found it has made me more spiritual in preaching. I have prized the gospel more than ever, and hope it will be the means of guarding me against future temptations. Your brother, with ardent affection, in the dear Lord Jesus. S. P."

From his first coming to Birmingham, his meekness and patience were put to the trial by an Antinomian spirit, which infected many individuals, both in and out of his congregation. It is well known, with what affection it was his practice to beseech sinners to be reconciled to God, and to exhort Christians to the exercise of practical godliness: but these were things which they could not endure. Soothing doctrine was all they desired.—Therefore it was, that his ministry was traduced by them as Arminian, and treated with neglect and contempt. But, like his divine Master, he bore the contradiction of sinners against himself, and this while he had the strongest satisfaction, that in those very things to which they objected, he was pleasing God. And though he plainly perceived the pernicious influence of their principles upon their own minds, as well as the minds of others, yet he treated them with great gentleness and long forbearance; and when it became necessary to exclude such of this description, as were in communion with him, it was with the greatest reluctance that he came into that measure, and not without having first tried all other means in vain. He was not apt to deal in harsh language; yet in one of his letters about that time, he speaks of the principles and spirit of these people, as a "cursed leaven."

Among his numerous religious friendships, he seems to have formed one, for the special purpose of *spiritual improvement.* This was with Mr. Summers, of London, who often accompanied him in his journeys; to whom, therefore, it might be expected he would open his heart without reserve.—Here, it is true, we sometimes see him, like his brethren, groaning under darkness, want of spirituality, and the remains of indwelling sin; but frequently rising above all, as into his native element, and pouring forth his ardent soul in expressions of joy and praise. On Aug. 19, 1793, he writes thus:

"My dear brother—When I take my pen to pursue my correspondence with *you,* I have no concern but to communicate something which may answer the same end we propose in our annual journeys: viz. lending some assistance in the important object of *getting, and keeping nearer to God.* This I am persuaded is the mark at which we should be continually aiming, nor rest satisfied until we attain that to which we aspire. I am really ashamed of myself, when on the one hand, I review the time that has elapsed since I first assumed the Christian name, with the opportunities of improvement in godliness which have crowded on my moments since that period; and when on the other, I *feel* the little advance I have made! More *light,* to be sure, I have; but light without *heat* leaves the Christian half dissatisfied. Yesterday I preached on the duty of engagedness in God's service, from Jer. xxx. 21, 'Who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me? saith the Lord.' (A text for which I am indebted to our last journey.) While urging the necessity of *heart* religion, including sincerity and ardor, I found myself much assisted by reflecting on the ardor which our dear Redeemer discovered in the cause of sinners. 'Ah,' I could not help saying, 'if our Saviour had measured his intenseness in his engagements for us, by our fervency in fulfilling our engagements to him, we should have been now farther from hope than we are from perfection.'

'Dear Lord, the ardor of *thy* love
Reproves my cold returns.'

"Two things are causes of daily astonishment to

me—the readiness of Christ to come from heaven to earth for me; and my backwardness to rise from earth to heaven with him. But oh how animating the prospect! A time approaches when we shall rise to sink no more: to 'be for ever with the Lord.' To be *with the Lord* for a week, for a day, for an hour; how sweetly must the moments pass! But to be *for ever* with the Lord—*that* instamps salvation with perfection; that gives an energy to our hopes, and a dignity to our joy, so as to render it 'unspeakable and full of glory!' I have had a few realizing moments since we parted, and the effect has been, I trust, a broken heart. O, my brother, it is desirable to have a broken heart, were it only for the sake of the pleasure it feels in being helped and healed by Jesus! Heart affecting views of the cursed effects of sin, are highly salutary to a Christian's growth in humility, confidence, and gratitude. At once how abasing and exalting the comparison of our loathsome hearts with that of the lovely Saviour! In him we see all that can charm an angel's heart; in *ourselves*, all that can gratify a devil's. And yet we may rest perfectly assured that these nests of iniquity shall ere long be transformed into the temples of God; and these sighs of sorrow be exchanged for songs of praise.

"Last Lord's day I spent the most profitable Sabbath to myself, that I ever remember since I have been in the ministry; and to this hour I feel the sweet solemnities of that day delightfully protracted. Ah, my brother, were it not for past experience, I should say,

> 'My heart presumes I cannot lose
> The relish all my days.'

But now I rejoice with trembling; desiring to 'hold fast what I have, that no man take my crown.' Yet fearing that I shall find how

> —'Ere one fleeting hour is past,
> The flattering world employs
> Some sensual bait to seize my taste,
> And to pollute my joys.'

"Yours, in our dear Saviour, S. P."

In April, 1794, dropping a few lines to the compiler of these Memoirs, on Lord's day evening, he thus concludes:—"We have had a good day. I find, as a dear friend once said, *It is pleasant speaking for God when we walk with him.* Oh for much of Enoch's spirit! The head of the church grant it to my dear brother, and his affectionate friend, S. P."

In another letter to Mr. Summers, dated June 24, 1794, he thus writes:—"We, my friend, have entered on a correspondence of heart with heart, and must not lose sight of that avowed object. I thank you sincerely for continuing the remembrance of so unworthy a creature, in your intercourse with heaven: and I thank that sacred Spirit, whose quickening influences you say you enjoy in the exercise. Yes, my brother, I have reaped the fruits of your supplications. I have been indulged with some seasons of unusual joy, tranquil as solitude, and solid as the rock on which our hopes are built. In public exercises, peculiar assistance has been afforded; especially in these three things—the exaltation of the Redeemer's glory; the detection of the crooked ways, false refuges, and self-delusions of the human heart; and the stirring up of the saints to press onward, making God's cause their own, and considering themselves as living not for themselves, but for *him* alone.

"Nor hath the word been without its effect; above fifty have been added to our church this year, most of whom I rejoice in, as the seals of my ministry in the Lord. Indeed I am surrounded with goodness; and scarce a day passes over my head, but I say, were it not for an *ungrateful heart* I should be the happiest man alive; and *that* excepted, I neither expect nor wish to be happier in this world. My wife, my children, and myself are uninterruptedly healthy; my friends kind; my soul at rest; my labors successful, &c. Who should be content and thankful, if I should not? Oh, my brother, help me to praise! S. P."

In a letter to Mrs. Pearce, from Plymouth, dated Sept. 2, 1794, the dark side of the cloud seems towards him: "I have felt much barrenness, says he, as to spiritual things, since I have been here, compared with my usual frame at home: and it is a poor exchange to enjoy the creature at the expense of the Creator's presence: a few seasons of spirituality I have enjoyed; but my heart, my inconstant heart, is too prone to rove from its proper centre. Pray for me, my dear, my dearest friend! I do for you daily. Oh wrestle for me, that I may have more of Enoch's spirit! I am fully persuaded that a Christian is no longer really happy, and inwardly satisfied, than whilst he walks with God; and I would this moment rejoice to abandon every pleasure here for a closer walk with him. I cannot, amidst all the round of social pleasure, amidst the most inviting scenes of nature, *feel* that peace with God which passeth understanding. My thirst for preaching Christ, I fear, abates, and a detestable vanity for the reputation of a "good preacher" (as the world terms it) has already cost me many conflicts. Daily I feel convinced of the propriety of a remark which my friend Summers made on his journey to Wales, that 'It is easier for a Christian to walk habitually near to God, than to be irregular in our walk with him.' But I want resolution; I want a contempt for the world; I want more heavenly-mindedness; I want more humility; I want much, very much of that, which God alone can bestow. Lord, help the weakest lamb in all thy flock!

"I preached this evening from Cant. ii. 3: 'I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.' But how little love for my Saviour did I feel! with what little affection and zeal did I speak! I am, by some, praised; I am followed by many; I am respected by most of my acquaintances; but all this is nothing; yea, less than nothing, compared with possessing 'this testimony, *that I please* GOD.' Oh thou friend of sinners, humble me by repentance, and melt me down with love!

"To-morrow morning I set off for Launceston. I write to-night, lest my stay in Cornwall might make my delay appear tedious to the dear and deserving object of my most undissembled love. Oh, my Sarah, had I as much proof that I loved *Jesus Christ*, as I have of my love to *you*, I should prize it more than rubies! As often as you can find an hour for correspondence, think of your more than ever affectionate S. P."

In another to Mr. Summers, dated Nov. 10, 1794, he says:—"I suppose I shall visit London in the spring. Prepare my way by communion both with God and man. I hope your soul prospers. I have enjoyed more of God within this month than ever since the day of my espousals with him. Oh, my brother, help me to praise! I cannot say that I am quite so exalted in my frame to-day; yet still I acknowledge what I have lived upon for weeks.—That were there no being or thing in the universe, beside God and me, I should be at no loss for happiness. Oh,

> 'Tis heaven to rest in his embrace,
> And no where else but there.'

"S. P."

CHAPTER II.

His laborious exertions in promoting Missions to the heathen, and offering himself to become a Missionary.

Mr. Pearce has been uniformly the spiritual and the active servant of Christ; but neither his spirituality nor his activity would have appeared in the manner they have, but for his engagements in the *introduction of the gospel among the heathen.*

It was not long after his settlement at Birmingham, that he became acquainted with Mr. Carey, in whom he found a soul nearly akin to his own. When the brethren in the counties of Northampton and Leicester formed themselves into a Missionary Society at Kettering, in Oct. 1792, he was there, and entered into the business with all his heart. On his return to Birmingham, he communicated the subject to his congregation with so much effect, that to the small sum of £13 2*s.* 6*d*, with which the subscription was begun, was added £70, which was collected and transmitted to the treasurer; and the leading members of the church formed themselves into an assistant society. Early in the following spring, when it was resolved that our brethren, Thomas and Carey, should go on a mission to the Hindoos, and a considerable sum of money was wanted for the purpose, he labored with increasing ardor in various parts of the kingdom; and when the object was accomplished, he rejoiced in all his labor, smiling in every company, and blessing God.

During his labors and journeys, on this important object, he wrote several letters to his friends, an extract or two from which, will discover the state of his mind at this period, as well as the encouragements that he met with in his work at home:—

TO MR. STEADMAN.

Birmingham, February 8, 1793.

"My very dear brother—Union of sentiment often creates friendship among carnal men, and similarity of feeling never fails to produce affection among pious men, as far as that similarity is known. I have loved you ever since I knew you. We saw, we felt alike in the interesting concerns of personal religion. We formed a reciprocal attachment. We expressed it by words. We agreed to do so by correspondence; and we have not altogether been wanting to our engagements. But our correspondence has been interrupted, not, I believe, through any diminution of regard on either side: I am persuaded not on mine. I rather condemn myself as the first aggressor; but I excuse while I condemn, and so would you, did you know half the concerns which devolve upon me in my present situation. Birmingham is a central place; the inhabitants are numerous; our members are between three and four hundred. The word preached has lately been remarkably blessed. In less than five months I baptized nearly forty persons, almost all newly awakened. Next Lord's day week I expect to add to their number. These persons came to my house to propose the most important of all inquiries: 'What must we do to be saved?' I have been thus engaged some weeks during the greatest part of most days. This with four sermons a week, will account for my neglect. But your letter, received this evening, calls forth every latent affection of my heart for you. We are, my dear brother, not only united in the common object of pursuit—*salvation;* not only rest our hopes on the same foundation—*Jesus Christ;* but we feel alike respecting the poor heathens! Oh, how Christianity expands the mind! What tenderness for our poor fellow sinners! What sympathy for their moral misery! What desires to do them everlasting good doth it provoke! How satisfying to our judgments is this evidence of grace! How gratifying to our present taste are these benevolent breathings! Oh, how I love that man whose soul is deeply affected with the importance of the precious gospel to idolatrous heathens! Excellently, my dear brother, you observe, that, great as its blessings are in the estimation of a sinner called in a Christian country, inexpressibly greater must they shine on the newly illuminated mind of a converted pagan.

"We shall be glad of all your assistance in a pecuniary way, as the expense will be heavy. Dear brother Carey has paid us a visit of love this week. He preached excellently to-night. I expect brother Thomas next week or the week after. I wish you would meet him here. I have a house at your command, and a heart greatly attached to you.

"S. P."

TO MR. FULLER.

February 23, 1793.

"I am willing to go any where, and do any thing in my power; but I hope no plan will be suffered to interfere with the affecting—hoped for—dreaded day, March 13, (the day of our brethren, Carey and Thomas's solemn designation at Leicester.) Oh, how the anticipation of it at once rejoices and afflicts me. Our hearts need steeling to part with our much-loved brethren, who are about to venture their all for the name of the Lord Jesus. I feel my soul melting within me when I read the twentieth chapter of the Acts, and especially verses 36—38. But why grieve? We shall see them again: Oh, yes; them, and the children whom the Lord will give them; we, and the children whom the Lord hath given us. We shall meet again: not to weep and pray, but to smile and praise. S. P."

From the day of the departure of the missionaries, no one was more importunate in prayer than Mr. Pearce; and on the news of their safe arrival, no one was more filled with joy and thankfulness.

Hitherto we had witnessed his zeal in promoting this important undertaking *at home;* but this did not satisfy him. In October, 1794, we were given to understand that he had for some time had it in serious contemplation to go himself, and to cast in his lot with his brethren in India. When his designs were first discovered, his friends and connections were much concerned about it, and endeavored to persuade him that he was already in a sphere of usefulness too important to be relinquished. But his answer was, that they were too interested in the affair to be competent judges, and nothing would satisfy him short of his making a formal offer of his services to the committee: nor could he be happy for *them* to decide upon it, without their appointing a day of solemn prayer for the purpose, and, when assembled, hearing an account of the principal exercises of his mind upon the subject, with the reasons which induced him to make the proposal, as well as the reasons alleged by his connections against it.

On Oct. 4, 1794, he wrote to an intimate friend, of whom he entertained a hope that he might accompany him, as follows:

"Last Wednesday I rode to Northampton, where a ministers' meeting was held on the following day. We talked much about the mission. We read some fresh and very encouraging accounts. We lamented that we could obtain no suitable persons to send out to the assistance of our brethren. Now what do you think was said at this meeting? My dear brother, do not be surprised that *all* present united in opinion, that in all our connection there was no man known to us so suitable as *you*, provided you were disposed for it, and things could be brought to bear. I thought it right to mention this circumstance; and one thing more I cannot refrain from saying, that were it manifestly the will of God, I should call that the happiest hour of my life.

which witnessed our *both* embarking with our families on board one ship, as helpers of the servants of Jesus Christ already in Hindostan. Yes, I could unreluctantly leave Europe and all its contents for the pleasures and perils of this glorious service. Often my heart in the sincerest ardors thus breathes forth its desires unto God: 'Here am I, send me!' But I am ignorant whether you from experience can realize my feelings. Perhaps you have friendship enough for me to lay open your meditations on this subject in your next. If you have had half the exercises that I have, it will be a relief to your laboring hand: or, if you think I have made too free with you, reprove me, and I will love you still. O if I could find a heart that had been tortured and ravished like my own in this respect, I should form a new kind of alliance, and feel a friendship of a novel species. With eagerness should I communicate all the vicissitudes of my sensations, and with eagerness listen to a recital of kindred feelings. With impatience I should seek, and with gratitude receive direction and support, and, I hope, feel a new occasion of thankfulness, when I bow my knee to the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort. Whence is it that I thus write to *you*, as I have never written to any one before? Is there a fellowship of the Spirit; or is it the confidence that I have in your friendship that thus directs my pen? Tell me, dear ———, tell me how you have felt, and how you still feel on this interesting subject, and do not long delay the gratification to your very affectionatefriend and brother, S. P."

About a month preceding the decision of this affair, he drew up a *narrative* of his experience respecting it; resolving at the same time to set apart one day in every week for secret fasting and prayer to God for direction; and to keep a *diary* of the exercises of his mind during the month.

When the committee were met at Northampton, according to his desire, he presented to them the narrative; and which was as follows:—

"October 8, 1794. Having had some peculiar exercises of mind relative to my personaliy attempting to labor for the dear Redeemer amongst the *heathen;* and being at a loss to know what is the will of the Lord in this matter respecting me, I have thought that I might gain some satisfaction by adopting these two resolutions: First, That I will, as in the presence of God, faithfully endeavor to recollect the various workings of my mind on this subject, from the first period of my feeling any desire of this nature until now, and commit them to writing; together with what considerations do now, on the one hand, impel me to the work, and on the other, what prevent me from immediately resolving to enter upon it. Secondly, That I will from this day keep a regular journal, with special relation to this matter.

"This account and journal will, I hope, furnish me with much assistance, in forming a future opinion of the path of duty; as well as help any friends whom I may hereafter think proper to consult, to give me suitable advice in the business. Lord, help me!

"It is very common for young converts to feel strong desires for the conversion of others. These desires immediately followed the evidences of my own religion: and I remember well they were particularly fixed upon the poor heathens. I believe the first week that I knew the grace of God in truth, I put up many fervent cries to heaven in their behalf; and at the same time felt a strong desire to be employed in promoting their salvation. It was not long after, that the first settlers sailed for Botany bay. I longed to go with them, although in company with the convicts, in hopes of making known the blessings of the great salvation in New Zealand. I actually had thought of making an effort to go out unknown to my friends; but, ignorant how to proceed, I abandoned my purpose. Nevertheless, I could not help talking about it; and at one time a report was circulated that I was really going; and a neighboring minister very seriously conversed with me upon the subject.

"While I was at the Bristol academy, the desire remained; but not with that energy as at first, except on one or two occasions. Being sent by my tutor to preach two Sabbaths at Coldford, I felt particular sweetness in devoting the evenings of the week, to going from house to house among the colliers, who dwell in the *Forest of Deane*, adjoining the town, conversing and praying with them, and preaching to them. In these exercises I found the most solid satisfaction, that I have ever known in discharging the duties of my calling. In a poor hut, with a stone to stand upon, and a three-legged stool for my desk, surrounded with thirty or forty of the smutty neighbors, I have felt such an unction from above, that my whole auditory have been melted into tears, whilst directed to 'the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world;' and I, weeping among them, could scarcely speak, or they hear, for interrupting sighs and sobs. Many a time did I then think, Thus it was with the apostles of our Lord, when they went from house to house among the poor heathen. In work like this, I could live and die. Indeed, had I at that time been at liberty to settle, I should have preferred that situation to any in the kingdom, with which I was then acquainted.

"But the Lord placed me in a situation very different. He brought me to Birmingham; and here, among the novelties, cares, and duties of my station, I do not remember any wish for foreign service, till after a residence of some months, I heard Dr. Coke preach at one of Mr. Wesley's chapels, from Psalm lxviii. 31. 'Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God.' Then it was, that in Mr Horne's phrase, 'I felt a passion for missions.' Then I felt an interest in the state of the heathen world, far more deep and permanent than before, and seriously thought how I could best promote their obtaining the knowledge of a crucified Jesus.

"As no way at that time was open, I cannot say, that I thought of taking a part of the good work among the heathen abroad; but resolved that I would render them all the assistance I could at home. My mind was employed during the residue of that week, in meditating on Psalm lxvii. 3. 'Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God;'— and the next Sabbath morning I spoke from those words, On the promised increase of the church of God. I had observed that our monthly meetings for prayer, had been better attended than the other prayer meetings, from the time that I first knew the people in Cannon street: but I thought a more general attention to them was desirable. I therefore preached on the Sabbath-day evening preceding the next monthly prayer-meeting, from Matt. vi. 10.— 'Thy kingdom come;' and urged with ardor and affection, a universal union of the serious part of the congregation in this exercise. It rejoiced me to see three times as many the next night as usual; and for some time after that, I had nearly equal cause for joy.

"As to my own part, I continued to preach much upon the promises of God, respecting the conversion of the heathen nations; and by so doing, and always communicating to my people, every piece of information I could obtain respecting the present state of missions, they soon imbibed the same spirit: and from that time to this, they have discovered so much concern for the more extensive spread of the gospel, that at our monthly prayer-meetings, both

stated and occasional, I should be as much surprised at the case of the heathen being omitted in any prayer, as at an omission of the name and merits of Jesus.

"Indeed it has been a frequent means of enkindling my languid devotion, in my private, domestic, and public engagements in prayer. When I have been barren in petitioning for myself, and other things, often have I been sweetly enlarged, when I came to notice the situation of those who were perishing for lack of knowledge.

"Thus I went on praying, and preaching, and conversing on the subject, till the time of brother Carey's ordination at Leicester, May 24, 1791. On the evening of that day, he read to the ministers a great part of his manuscript, since published; entitled, *An Inquiry into the obligations of Christians to use means for the conversion of the heathens.* This added fresh fuel to my zeal. But to pray and preach on the subject, was all I could then think of doing. But when I heard of a proposed meeting at Kettering, Oct. 2, 1792, for the express purpose of considering our duty in regard to the heathens, I could not resist my inclination for going; although at that time I was not much acquainted with the ministers of the Northamptonshire association. There I got my judgment informed, and my heart increasingly interested. I returned home resolved to lay myself out in the cause. The public steps I have taken are too well known to need repeating; but my mind became now inclined to go among the heathen myself. Yet a consideration of my connections with the dear people of God in Birmingham, restrained my desires, and kept me from naming my wishes to any body, (as I remember) except to brother Carey. With him I was pretty free. We had an interesting conversation about it just before he left Europe. I shall never forget the *manner* of his saying, 'Well, you will come after us.' My heart said, Amen! and my eagerness for the work increased; though I never talked freely about it, except to my wife, and we both then thought that my relation to the church in Cannon street, and usefulness there, forbade any such an attempt. However, I have made it a constant matter of prayer, often begging of God, as I did when first I was disposed for the work of the ministry, either that he would take away the desire, or open a door for its fulfilment. And the result has uniformly been, that the more spiritual I have been in the frame of my mind, the more love I have felt for God; and the more communion I have enjoyed with him, so much the more disposed have I been, to engage as a missionary among the heathen.

"Until the accounts came of our brethren's entrance on the work in India, my connections in Europe pretty nearly balanced my desire for going abroad; and though I felt quite devoted to the Lord's will and work, yet I thought the scale rather preponderated on the side of my abiding in my present situation.

"But since our brethren's letters have informed us, that there is such prospects of usefulness in Hindostan—that priests and people are ready to hear the word—and that preachers are a thousand times more wanted, than people to preach to, my heart has been more deeply affected than ever with their condition; and my desires for a participation of the toils and pleasures, crosses and comforts, of which they are the subjects, are advanced to an anxiety which nothing can remove, and time seems to increase.

"It has pleased God also lately to teach me more than ever, that HIMSELF is the *fountain* of happiness; that likeness to him, friendship for him, and communion with him, form the basis of all true enjoyment; and that this can be attained as well in an eastern jungle, among Hindoos and Moors, as in the most polished parts of Europe. The very *disposition*, which, blessed be my dear Redeemer! he has given me, to be any thing, to do any thing, or endure any thing, so that his name might be glorified—I say, the *disposition* itself is heaven begun below. I do feel a daily panting after more devotedness to his service, and I can never think of my suffering Lord, without dissolving into love; love which constrains me to glorify him with my body and spirit, which are his.

"I do often represent to myself all the possible hardships of a mission, arising from my own heart, the nature of the country, domestic connections, disappointment in my hopes, &c. &c. And then I set over against them all, these two thoughts—*I am God's servant, and God is my friend.* In this, I anticipate happiness in the midst of suffering, light in darkness, and life in death. Yea, I do not count my life dear unto myself, so that I may win some poor heathens unto Christ; and I am willing to be offered as a sacrifice, on the service of the faith of the gospel.

"Mr. Horne justly observes, 'that, in order to justify a man's undertaking the work of a missionary, he should be qualified for it, disposed heartily to enter upon it, and free from such ties as exclude an engagement.' As to the first, others must judge for me; but they must not be men who have an interest in keeping me at home. I shall rejoice in opportunities of attaining to an acquaintance with the ideas of judicious and *impartial* men in this matter, and with them I must leave it. A willingness to embark in this cause I do possess: and I can hardly persuade myself that God has for ten years inclined my heart to this work, without having any thing for me to do in it. But the third thing requires more consideration; and here alone I hesitate." Here he goes on to state all the objections from this quarter, with his answers to them, leaving it with his brethren to decide when they had heard the whole.

The committee, after the most serious and mature deliberation, though they were fully satisfied as to brother Pearce's qualifications, and greatly approved of his spirit, yet were unanimously of opinion *that he ought not to go;* and that not merely on account of his connections at home, which might have been pleaded in the case of brother Carey, but on account of the mission itself, which required his assistance in the station which he already occupied.

In this opinion, brother Carey himself, with singular disinterestedness of mind, afterwards concurred; and wrote to brother Pearce to the same effect.

On receiving the opinion of the committee, he immediately wrote to Mrs. P. as follows:—

Northampton, Nov. 13, 1793.

"MY DEAR SARAH—I am disappointed, but not dismayed. I ever wish to make my Saviour's will my own. I am more satisfied than ever I expected I should be with a negative upon my earnest desires, because the business has been so conducted, that I think, (if by any means such an issue could be insured) the mind of Christ has been obtained. My dear brethren here have treated the affair with as much seriousness and affection as I could possibly desire, and, I think, more than so insignificant a worm could expect. After we had spent the former part of this day in fasting and prayer, with conversation on the subject, till near two o'clock, brother Potts, King, and I retired. We prayed while the committee consulted. The case seemed difficult, and I suppose they were nearly two hours in deciding. At last, *time* forced them to a point, and their answer I inclose for your satisfaction.

Pray take care of it; it will serve for me to refer to when my mind may labor beneath a burden of guilt another day.

"I am my dear Sarah's own S. P."

The decision of the committee, though it rendered him much more reconciled to abide in his native country, than he could have been without it; yet did not in the least abate his zeal for the object. As he could not promote it abroad, he seemed resolved to lay himself out more for it at home. In March, 1795, after a dangerous illness, he says, in a letter to Mr. Fuller—"Through mercy I am almost in a state of convalescence. May my spared life be wholly devoted to the service of my dear Redeemer. I do not care where I am, whether in England or in India, so I am employed as he would have me; but surely we need pray hard that God would send some more help to Hindostan."

In January, 1796, when he was first informed by the secretary, of a young man, (Mr. Fountain) being desirous of going, of the character that was given of him by our friend Mr. Savage, of London, and of a committee meeting being in contemplation, he wrote thus in answer—"Your letter, just arrived, put—I was going to say, another soul into my little body; at least it has added new life to the soul I have. I cannot be contented with the thought of being absent from your proposed meeting. No, no; I must be there, (for my own sake I mean) and try to sing with you, 'O'er the gloomy hills of darkness.'"*

In August, the same year, having received a letter from India, he wrote to Mr. Fuller as follows—"Brother Carey speaks in such a manner of the effects of the gospel in his neighborhood, as in my view promises a fair illustration of our Lord's parable, when he compared the kingdom of heaven to a little leaven, hid in three measures of meal, which insinuated itself so effectually as to leaven the lump at last. Blessed be God, the leaven is already in the meal. The fermentation is begun; and my hopes were never half so strong as they are now, that the whole shall be effectually leavened. O THAT I WERE THERE TO WITNESS THE DELIGHTFUL PROGRESS! But whither am I running? . . . I LONG TO WRITE TO YOU FROM HINDOSTAN!"

On receiving other letters from India, in January, 1797, he thus writes:—"Perhaps you are now rejoicing in spirit with me over fresh intelligence from Bengal. This moment have I concluded reading two letters from brother Thomas: one to the Society, and the other to myself. He speaks of others from brother Carey. I hope they are already in your possession. If his correspondence has produced the same effects on your heart as brother Thomas's has on mine, you are filled with gladness and hope. I am grieved that I cannot convey them to you immediately. I long to witness the pleasure their contents will impart to all whose hearts are with us. O that I were accounted worthy of the Lord to preach the gospel to the Booteas!"

Being detained from one of our mission meetings by preparing the Periodical Accounts for the press, he soon after wrote as follows:—"We shall now get out No. IV. very soon. I hope it will go to the press in a very few days. Did you notice, that the very day on which we invited all our friends to a day of prayer on behalf of the mission, (Dec. 28, 1796) was the same in which brother Carey sent his best and most interesting accounts to the Society? I hope you had solemn and sweet seasons at Northampton. On many accounts I should have rejoiced to have been with you: yet I am satisfied that on the whole I was doing best at home."

It has been already observed, that for a month preceding the decision of the committee, he resolved to devote one day in every week to secret prayer and fasting, and to keep a *diary* of the exercises of his mind during the whole of that period. This diary was not shown to the committee at that time, but merely the preceding *narrative*. Since his death a few of them have perused it; and have been almost ready to think, that if they had seen it before, they dared not oppose his going. But the Lord hath taken him to himself. It no longer remains a question now, whether he shall labor in England or in India. A few passages, however, from this transcript of his heart, while contemplating a great and disinterested undertaking, will furnish a better idea of his character than could be given by any other hand.

"Oct. 8, 1794. Had some remarkable freedom and affection this morning, both in family and secret prayer. With many tears I dedicated myself, body and soul, to the service of Jesus; and earnestly implored full satisfaction respecting the path of duty. I feel a growing deadness for all earthly comforts; and derive my happiness immediately from God himself. May I still endure, as Moses did, by seeing him who is invisible!

"Oct. 10. Enjoyed much freedom to-day in the family. Whilst noticing in prayer the state of the millions of heathen who know not God, I felt the aggregate value of their immortal souls with peculiar energy.

"Afterwards was much struck whilst (on my knees before God in secret) I read the fourth chapter of Micah. The ninth verse I fancied very applicable to the church in Cannon street; but what reason is there for such a cry about so insignificant a worm as I am? The third chapter of Habbakuk too well expresses that mixture of *solemnity* and *confidence* with which I contemplate the work of the mission.

"Whilst at prayer meeting to-night, I learned more of the meaning of some passages of Scripture than ever before. Suitable frames of soul are like good lights in which a painting appears to its full advantage. I had often meditated on Phil. iii. 7, 8, and Gal. vi. 14; but never *felt* crucifixion to the world, and disesteem for all that it contains, as at that time. All prospects of pecuniary independence, and growing reputation, with which in unworthier moments I had amused myself, were now chased from my mind; and the desire of living *wholly* to Christ swallowed up every other thought. Frowns and smiles, fulness or want, honor and reproach, were now equally indifferent; and when I concluded the meeting, my whole soul felt, as it were, going after the lost sheep of Christ among the heathen.

"I do feel a growing satisfaction in the proposal of spending my whole life in something nobler than the locality of this island will admit. I long to raise my Master's banner in climes where the sound of his fame hath but scarcely reached. He hath said, for my encouragement, that *all* nations shall flow unto it.

"The conduct and success of Stach, Boonish, and other Moravian missionaries in Greenland, both confound and stimulate me. O Lord, forgive my past indolence in thy service, and help me to redeem the residue of my days for exertions more worthy a friend of mankind, and a servant of God.

"Oct. 13. Being taken up with visitors the former part of the day, I spent the after part in application to the Bengal language, and found the difficulties I apprehended vanish as fast as I encountered them. I read and prayed, prayed and read, and made no small advances. Blessed be God!

* The 428th Hymn of Dr. Rippon's Selection, frequently sung at our committee meetings.

"Oct. 15. There are in Birmingham 50,000 inhabitants; and exclusive of the vicinity, ten ministers who preach the fundamental truths of the gospel. In Hindostan there are twice as many millions of inhabitants; and not so many gospel preachers. Now Jesus Christ hath commanded his ministers to go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. Why should we be so disproportionate in our labors? Peculiar circumstances must not be urged against positive commands: I am therefore bound, if others do not go, to make the means more proportionate to the multitude.

"To-night, reading some letters from brother Carey, in which he speaks of his wife's illness when she first came into the country, I endeavored to realize myself not only with a sick, but a *dead* wife. The thought was like a cold dagger to my heart at first; but on recollection I considered that the same God ruled in India as in Europe; and that he could either preserve her, or support me, as well there as here. My business is only to be where he would have me. Other things I leave to him. O Lord, though with timidity, yet I hope not without satisfaction, I look every possible evil in the face, and say, 'Thy will be done.'

"Oct. 17. This is the first day I have set apart for extraordinary devotion in relation to my present exercise of mind. Rose earlier than usual, and began the day in prayer that God would be with me in every part of it, and grant that the end I have in view, may be clearly ascertained—the knowledge of his will.

"Considering the importance of the work before me, I began at the foundation of all religion, and reviewed the grounds on which I stood; the being of a God, the relation of mankind to him, with the divine inspiration of the Scriptures; and the review afforded me great satisfaction.* I also compared the different religions which claimed divine origin, and found little difficulty in determining which had most internal evidence of its divinity. I attentively read, and seriously considered Doddridge's three excellent sermons on the evidences of the Christian religion, which was followed by such conviction, that I had hardly patience to conclude the book before I fell on my knees before God to bless him for such a religion, established on such a basis; and I have received more *solid* satisfaction this day upon the subject than ever I did before.

"I also considered, since the gospel is true, since Christ is the head of the church, and his will is the law of all his followers, what are the obligations of his servants in respect of the enlargement of his kingdom. I here referred to our Lord's commission, which I could not but consider as universal in its object, and permanent in its obligations. I read brother Carey's remarks upon it—and as the command has never been repealed; as there are millions of beings in the world on whom the command may be exercised; as I can produce no counter revelation; and as I lie under no natural impossibilities of performing it, I concluded that I, as a servant of Christ, was bound by this law.

"I took the narrative of my experience, and statement of my views on the subject in my hand, and bowing down before God, I earnestly besought an impartial and an enlightened spirit. I then perused that paper; and can now say, that I have (allowing for my own fallibility) not one doubt upon the subject. I therefore resolved to close this solemn season with reading a portion of both Testaments, and earnest prayer to God for my family, my people, the heathen world, the society, and particularly for the success of our dear brethren Thomas and Carey, and his blessing, presence, and grace to be ever my guide and glory. Accordingly, I read the 49th chapter of Isaiah; and with what sweetness! I never read a chapter in private with such feelings, since I have been in the ministry. The 8, 9, 10, 20 and 21 verses I thought remarkably suitable.

"Read also part of the epistle to the Ephesians, and the first chapter to the Philippians. O that for *me* to live may be *Christ* alone! Blessed be my dear Saviour, in prayer I have had such fellowship with him, as would warm me in Greenland, comfort me in New Zealand, and rejoice me in the valley of the shadow of death!

"Oct. 18. I dreamed that I saw one of the Christian Hindoos. O how I loved him! I long to realize my dream. How pleasant will it be to sit down at the Lord's table with our black brethren, and hear Jesus preached in their language. Surely then will come to pass the saying that is written, 'In Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, all are ONE in him.'

"Have been happy to-day in completing the manuscript of Periodical Accounts, No. I. Any thing relative to the salvation of the heathen, brings a certain pleasure with it. I find I cannot pray, nor converse, nor read, nor study, nor preach with satisfaction, without reference to this subject.

"Oct. 20. Was a little discouraged on reading Mr. Zeigenbalg's conferences with the Malabarians, till I recollected, what ought to be ever present to my mind, in brother Carey's words—*The work is God's.*

"In the evening I found some little difficulty with the language; but considering how merchants and captains overcome this difficulty for the sake of wealth, I sat confounded before the Lord that I should ever have indulged such a thought; and looking up to him, I set about it with cheerfulness, and found that I was making a sensible advance, although I can never apply till 11 o'clock at night, on account of my other duties.*

"Preached from 2 Kings, iv. 26. 'It is well.' Was much enlarged both in thought and expression. Whilst speaking of the satisfaction enjoyed by a truly pious mind, when it feels itself in all circumstances and times in the hand of a *good God*, I felt, that were the universe destroyed, and I the only being in it, beside God, HE is fully adequate to my complete happiness; and had I been in an African wood, surrounded with venomous serpents, devouring beasts, and savage men, in such a frame, I should be the subject of perfect peace and exalted joy. Yes, O my God, thou hast taught me that THOU *alone* art worthy of my confidence; and with this sentiment fixed in my heart, I am free from all solicitude about any temporal prospects or concerns. If *thy* presence be enjoyed, poverty shall be riches, darkness light, affliction prosperity, reproach

* There is a wide difference between admitting these principles in theory, and *making use of them.* David might have worn Saul's accoutrements at a parade: but in meeting Goliath he must go forth in an armor that had been *tried.* A mariner may sit in his cabin at his ease while the ship is in harbor; but ere he undertakes a voyage he must examine its soundness, and whether it will endure the storms which may overtake him.

* Night studies, often continued till two or three o'clock in the morning, it is to be feared, were the first occasion of impairing Mr. Pearce's health, and brought on that train of nervous sensations with which he was afterwards afflicted. Though not much accustomed to converse on this subject, he once acknowledged to a brother in the ministry, that owing to his enervated state, he sometimes dreaded the approach of public services to such a degree, that he would rather have submitted to stripes than engage in them; and that while in the pulpit, he was frequently distressed with the apprehension of falling over it.

my honor, and fatigue my rest: and thou hast said, 'My presence shall go with thee.' Enough, Lord, I ask for nothing more.

"But how sad the proofs of our depravity; and how insecure the best frames we enjoy! Returning home, a wicked expression from a person who passed me caught my ear, and occurred so often to my thoughts for some minutes, as to bring guilt upon my mind, and overwhelm me with shame before God. But I appealed to God for my hatred of all such things, secretly confessed the sin of my heart, and again ventured to the mercy-seat. On such occasions, how precious a Mediator is to the soul.

"Oct. 22. I did not for the former part of the day feel my wonted ardor for the work of a missionary; but rather an inclination to consult flesh and blood, and look at the worst side of things. I did so; but when on my knees before God in prayer about it, I first considered that my judgment was still equally satisfied, and my conscience so convinced, that I durst not relinquish the work for a thousand worlds. And then I thought that this dull frame had not been without its use: as I was now fully convinced, that my desires to go did not arise from any fluctuation of inconstant passions, but the settled convictions of my judgment. I therefore renewed my vows unto the Lord, that let what difficulties soever be in the way, I would (provided the society approved) surmount them all. I felt a kind of unutterable satisfaction of mind, in my resolution of leaving the decision in the hands of my brethren. May God rightly dispose their hearts! I have no doubt but he will.

"Oct. 23. Have found a little time to apply to the Bengalee language. How pleasant it is to work for God! Love transforms thorns to roses, and makes pain itself a pleasure. I never sat down to any study with such peculiar and continued satisfaction. The thought of exalting the Redeemer in this language, is a spur to my application paramount to every discouragement for want of a living tutor. I have passed this day with an abiding satisfaction respecting my present views.

"Oct. 24. O for the enlightening, enlivening, and sanctifying presence of God to-day! It is the *second* of those days of extraordinary devotion which I have set apart for seeking God, in relation to the mission. How shall I spend it? I will devote the morning to prayer, reading, and meditation; and the afternoon to visiting the wretched, and relieving the needy. May God accept my services, guide me by his counsel, and employ me for his praise!

"Having besought the Lord that he would not suffer me to deceive myself in so important a matter as that which I had now retired to consider, and exercised some confidence that he would be the rewarder of those who diligently seek him, I read the 119th Psalm at the conclusion of my prayer, and felt and wondered at the congruity of so many of the verses to the breathings of my own heart. Often, with holy admiration, I paused, and read, and thought, and prayed over the verse again, especially verses 20, 31, 59, 60, 112, 145, 146. 'My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgments at all times. I have stuck unto thy testimonies, O Lord, put me not to shame.'

"Most of the morning I spent in seriously reading Mr. Horne's *Letters on Missions*, having first begged of the Lord to make the perusal profitable to my instruction in the path of duty. To the interrogation, 'Which of you will forsake all, deny himself, take up his cross, and, if God pleases, die for his religion?' I replied spontaneously, Blessed be God, I am willing! Lord, help me to accomplish it!

"Closed this season with reading the 61st and 62nd chapters of Isaiah, and prayer for the church of God at large, my own congregation, the heathens, the society, brethren Thomas and Carey, all missionaries whom God hath sent of every denomination, my own case, my wife and family, and for assistance in my work.

"The after part of this day has been gloomy indeed. All the painful circumstances which can attend my going have met upon my heart, and formed a load almost insupportable. A number of things, which have been some time accumulating, have united their pressure, and made me groan, being burdened. Whilst at a prayer meeting I looked round on my Christian friends, and said to myself, A few months more, and probably I shall leave you all! But in the deepest of my gloom, I resolved though faint yet to pursue, not doubting but my Lord would give me strength equal to the day.

"I had scarcely formed this resolution before it occurred, My Lord and Master was a man of sorrows. Oppressed, and covered with blood, he cried, 'If it be possible, let this cup pass from me.' Yet in the depth of his agonies, he added, 'Thy will be done.' This thought was to me what the sight of the cross was to Bunyan's pilgrim; I lost my burden. Spent the remainder of the meeting in sweet communion with God.

"But on coming home, the sight of Mrs. P. replaced my load. She had for some time been much discouraged at the thoughts of going. I therefore felt reluctant to say any thing on this subject, thinking it would be unpleasant to her: but though I strove to conceal it, an involuntary sigh betrayed my uneasiness. She kindly inquired the cause. I avoided at first an explanation, till she, guessing the reason, said to this effect—'I hope you will be no more uneasy on *my* account. For the last two or three days, I have been more comfortable than ever in the thought of going. I have considered the steps you are pursuing to know the mind of God, and I think you cannot take more proper ones. When you consult the ministers, you should represent your obstacles as strongly as your inducements; and then, if they advise your going, though the parting from my friends will be almost insupportable, yet I will make myself as happy as I can, and God can make me happy any where.'

"Should this little diary fall into the hands of a man having the soul of a missionary, circumstanced as I am, he will be the only man capable of sharing my peace, my joy, my gratitude, my rapture of soul. Thus at evening tide it is light; thus God brings his people through fire and through water into a wealthy place; thus those who ask do receive, and their joy is full. 'O love the Lord, ye his saints: there is no want to them that fear him!'

"Oct. 26. Had much enlargement this morning, whilst speaking on the nature, extent and influence of divine love; what designs it formed—with what energy it acted—with what perseverance it pursued its object—what obstacles it surmounted—what difficulties it conquered—and what sweetness it imparted under the heaviest loads, and severest trials! Almost through the day I enjoyed a very desirable frame, and on coming home, my wife and I had some conversation on the subject of my going. She said, though in general the thought was painful, yet there were some seasons when she had no preference, but felt herself disposed to go or stay, as the Lord should direct.

"This day wrote to brother Fuller, briefly stating my desires, requesting his advice, and proposing a meeting of the committee on the business. I feel great satisfaction arising from my leaving the matter to the determination of my honored brethren, and *to God* through them.

"Oct. 27. To-day I send a packet to our brethren

in India. I could not forbear telling brother Carey all my feelings, views, and expectations: but without saying I should be entirely governed by the opinion of the society.

"Oct. 28. Still panting to preach Jesus among my fellow sinners to whom he is yet unknown. Wrote to Dr. Rogers, of Philadelphia, to-day, upon the subject, with freedom and warmth; and inquired whether, whilst the people of the United States were forming societies to encourage arts, liberty and emigration, there could not a few be found among them who would form a society for the transmission of the word of life to the benighted heathens; or in case that could not be, whether they might not strengthen our hands in Europe, by some benevolent proofs of concurring with us in a design, which they speak of with such approbation? With this I sent Horne's Letters. I will follow both with my prayers, and who can tell?

"Oct. 29. Looked over the code of Hindoo Laws to-day. How much is there to admire in it, founded on the principles of justice. The most salutary regulations are adopted in many circumstances. But what a pity that so much excellence should be abased by laws to establish or countenance idolatry, magic, prostitution, prayers for the dead, false witnessing, theft and suicide. How perfect is the morality of the gospel of Jesus; and how desirable that they should embrace it! Ought not means to be used? Can we assist them too soon? There is reason to think that their Shasters were penned about the beginning of the Kollee Jogue, which must be soon after the deluge: and are not 4000 years long enough for 100 millions of men to be under the empire of the devil?

"Oct. 31. I am encouraged to enter upon this day (which I set apart for supplicating God) by a recollection of the promises to those who seek him. If the sacred word be true, the servants of God can never seek his face in vain; and as I am conscious of my sincerity and earnest desire only to know his pleasure that I may perform it, I find a degree of confidence that I shall realize the fulfilment of the word on which he causeth me to hope.

"Began the day with solemn prayer for the assistance of the Holy Spirit in my present exercise, that so I might enjoy the spirit and power of prayer, and have my personal religion improved, as well as my public steps directed. In this duty I found a little quickening.

"I then read over the narrative of my experience, and my journal. I find my views are still the same; but my heart is much more established than when I began to write.

"Was much struck in reading Paul's words in 2 Cor. i. 17, when after speaking of his purpose to travel for the preaching of the gospel, he saith, 'Did I then use lightness when I was thus minded? Or the things that I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh, that with me there should be yea, yea—nay, nay?' The *piety* of the apostle in not purposing after the flesh, the *seriousness* of spirit with which he formed his designs, and his steadfast adherence to them, were in my view worthy of the highest admiration and strictest imitation.

'Thinking that I might get some assistance from David Brainerd's experience, I read his life to the time of his being appointed a missionary among the Indians. The exalted devotion of that dear man almost made me question mine. Yet at some seasons he speaks of sinking as well as rising. His singular piety excepted, his feelings, prayers, desires, comforts, hopes, and sorrows, are my own; and if I could follow him in nothing else, I knew I had been enabled to say this with him, 'I feel exceedingly calm, and quite resigned to God respecting my future improvement (or station) *when* and *where* he pleased. My faith lifted me above the world, and removed all those mountains which I could not look over of late. I thought I wanted not the favor of man to lean upon; for I knew God's favor was infinitely better, and that it was no matter *where* or *when* or *how* Christ should send me, nor with what trials he should still exercise me, if I might be prepared for his work and will.'

"Read the ii. iii. iv. v. and vi. chapters of the second epistle to the Corinthians. Felt a kind of placidity, but not much joy. On beginning the concluding prayer, I had no strength to wrestle, nor power with God at all. I seemed as one desolate and forsaken. I prayed for myself, the society, the missionaries, the converted Hindoos, the church in Cannon street, my family, and ministry; but yet all was dulness, and I feared I had offended the Lord. I felt but little zeal for the mission, and was about to conclude with a lamentation over the hardness of my heart; when of a sudden it pleased God to smite the rock with the rod of his Spirit, and immediately the waters began to flow. O what a heavenly, glorious, melting power was it! My eyes, almost closed with weeping, hardly suffer me to write. I feel it over again. O what a view of the love of a crucified Redeemer did I enjoy! the attractions of his cross, how powerful! I was as a giant refreshed with new wine, as to my animation; like Mary at the Master's feet, weeping for tenderness of soul; like a little child, for submission to my heavenly Father's will; and like Paul, for a victory over all self-love, and creature love, and fear of man, when these things stand in the way of my duty. The interest that Christ took in the redemption of the heathen, the situation of our brethren in Bengal, the worth of the soul, and the plain command of Jesus Christ, together with an irresistible drawing of soul, which by far exceeded any thing I ever felt before, and is impossible to be described to, or conceived of by those who have never experienced it; all compelled me to *vow* that I would, by his leave, serve him among the heathen. The Bible lying open before me, (upon my knees) many passages caught my eye and confirmed the purposes of my heart. If ever in my life I knew any thing of the influences of the Holy Spirit, I did at this time. I was swallowed up in God. Hunger, fulness, cold, heat, friends, and enemies, all seemed nothing before God. I was in a new world. All was delightful; for Christ was all, and in all. Many times I concluded prayer, but when rising from my knees, communion with God was so desirable, that I was sweetly drawn to it again and again, till my animal strength was almost exhausted. Then I thought it would be pleasure to *burn* for God.

"And now while I write, such a heavenly sweetness fills my soul, that no exterior circumstances can remove it; and I do uniformly feel, that the more I am thus, the more I pant for the service of my blessed Jesus among the heathen. Yes, my dear, my dying Lord, I am thine, thy servant; and if I neglect the service of so good a master, I may well expect a guilty conscience in life, and a death awful as that of Judas or of Spira!

"This evening I had a meeting with my friends. Returned much dejected. Reviewed a letter from brother Fuller, which, though he says he has many objections to my going, yet is so affectionately expressed as to yield me a gratification.

"Nov. 3. This evening, received a letter from brother Ryland, containing many objections: but contradiction itself is pleasant when it is the voice of judgment mingled with affection. I wish to remember that *I may be mistaken*, though I cannot say I am at present convinced that it is so. I am happy to find that brother Ryland approves of my referring it to the committee. I have much confidence

in the judgment of my brethren, and hope I shall be perfectly satisfied with their advice. I do think, however, if they knew how earnestly I pant for the work, it would be impossible for them to withhold their ready acquiescence. O Lord, thou knowest my sincerity, and that if I go not to the work it will not be owing to any reluctance on my part! If I stay in England, I fear I shall be a poor useless drone; or if a sense of duty prompt me to activity, I doubt whether I shall ever know inward peace and joy again. O Lord, I am, thou knowest I am, *oppressed;* undertake for me!

"Nov. 5. At times, to-day, I have been reconciled to the thought of staying if any brethren should so advise; but at other times, I seem to think I could not. I look at brother Carey's portrait as it hangs in my study, I love him in the bowels of Jesus Christ, and long to join his labors; every look calls up a hundred thoughts, all of which inflame my desire to be a fellow-laborer with him in the work of the Lord. One thing, however, I am resolved upon, that, the Lord keeping me, if I cannot go abroad, I will do all I can to serve the mission at home.

"Nov. 7. This is the last day of peculiar devotion before the deciding meeting. May I have strength to wrestle with God to-day for his wisdom to preside in the committee, and by faith to leave the issue to their determination.

"I did not enjoy much enlargement in prayer today. My mind seems at present incapable of those sensations of joy with which I have lately been much indulged, through its strugglings in relation to my going or staying: yet I have been enabled to commit the issue into the hands of God, as he may direct my brethren, hoping that their advice will be agreeable to his will."

The result of the committee meeting has already been related; together with the state of his mind, as far as could be collected from his letters, for some time after it. The termination of these tender and interesting exercises, and of all his other labors, in so speedy a removal from the present scene of action, may teach us not to draw any certain conclusion as to the designs of God concerning our future labors, from the ardor or sincerity of our feelings. He may take it well that "it was in our hearts to build him an house," though he should for wise reasons have determined not to gratify us. Suffice it, that in matters of *everlasting moment* he has engaged to "perfect that which concerns us." In this he hath condescended to bind himself, as by an oath, for our consolation; here, therefore, we may safely consider our spiritual desires as indicative of his designs: but it is otherwise in various instances with regard to present duty.

CHAPTER III.

His exercises and labors, from the time of his giving up the idea of going abroad, to the commencement of his last affliction.

Had the multiplied labors of this excellent man permitted his keeping a regular diary, we may see by the foregoing specimen of a single month, what a rich store of truly Christian experience would have pervaded these memoirs. We should then have been better able to trace the gradual openings of his holy mind, and the springs of that extraordinary unction of spirit, and energy of action, by which his life was distinguished. As it is, we can only collect a few gleanings, partly from memory, and partly from letters communicated by his friends.

This chapter will include a period of about four years, during which he went twice to London, to collect for the *Baptist mission*, and once he visited Dublin, at the invitation of the *Evangelical Society* in that city.

There appears throughout the general tenor of his life, a singular submissiveness to the will of God; and what is worthy of notice, this disposition was generally most conspicuous when his own will was most counteracted. The justness of this remark is sufficiently apparent from his letter to Mrs. Pearce, of Nov. 13, 1794,* after the decision of the committee; and the same spirit was carried into the common concerns of life. Thus, about a month afterwards, when his dear Louisa was ill of a fever, he thus writes from Northampton to Mrs. Pearce:—

December 13, 1794.

My dear Sarah—"I am just brought on the wings of celestial mercy safe to my Sabbath's station. I am well; and my dear friends here seem healthy and happy: but I feel for *you*. I long to know how our dear Louisa's pulse beats: I fear still feverish. We must not, however, suffer ourselves to be infected with a mental fever on this account. Is she ill? It is right. Is she very ill?——dying? It still is right. Is she gone to join the heavenly choristers? It is all right, notwithstanding our repinings——Repinings! no; we will not repine. It is best she should go. It is best for *her*. This we must allow. It is best for *us*. Do we expect it? O what poor, ungrateful, short-sighted worms are we! Let us submit, my Sarah, till we come to heaven, if we do not *then* see that it is best, let us then complain. But why do I attempt to console? Perhaps an indulgent Providence has ere now dissipated your fears: or if that same *kind Providence* has removed our babe, you have consolation enough in him who suffered more than we; and more than enough to quiet all our passions, in that astonishing consideration—'*God* so loved the world, that he *spared not* his own Son.' Did God cheerfully give the holy child Jesus for us? and shall we refuse our child to him! He gave his Son to *suffer;* he takes our children to *enjoy:* Yes, to enjoy *himself*.

"Yours, with the tenderest regard, S. P."

In June, 1795, he attended the Association at Kettering, partly on account of some missionary business there to be transacted. That was a season of great joy to many, especially the last forenoon previous to parting. From thence he wrote to Mrs. Pearce as follows:—

"From a pew in the house of God, at Kettering, with my cup of joy running over, I address you by the hand of brother Simmons. Had it pleased Divine Providence to have permitted your accompanying me, my pleasures would have received no small addition; because I should have hoped that you would have been filled with similar consolation, and have received equal edification by the precious means of grace on which I have attended. Indeed, I never remember to have enjoyed a public meeting to such a high degree since I have been in the habit of attending upon them. Oh that I may return to you, and the dear church of God, in the *fulness* of the blessing of the gospel of Christ! I hope, my beloved, that you are not without the enjoyment of the sweetness and supports of the blessed gospel. Oh that you may get and keep near to God, and in *him* find infinitely more than you can possibly lose by your husband's absence!

"Mr. Hall preached, last evening, from 1 Pet. i. 8. A most evangelical and experimental season! I was charmed and warmed. Oh that Jesus may go on to reveal himself to him as altogether lovely! I am unable to write more now. To-day, I set off for Northampton, and preach there to-night. The Lord bless you!"

In July, 1795, he received a pressing invitation from *The General Evangelical Society* in Dublin, to pay them a visit, and to assist in diffusing the gos-

* See page 379.

pel of the grace of God in that kingdom. To this invitation he replied in the following letter, addressed to Dr. McDowal:—

Birmingham, August 3, 1795.

"Rev. and dear sir—I received your favor of the 22d ult. and for the interesting reason you assign, transmit a 'speedy answer.' The society, on whose behalf you wrote, I have ever considered with the respect due to the real friends of the best of causes—the cause of God and of his Christ: a cause which embraces the most important and durable interests of our fellow-men; and your name, dear sir, I have been taught to hold in more than common esteem by my dear brother and father, Messrs. Birt and Francis. The benevolent institution which you are engaged in supporting, I am persuaded, deserves more than the good wishes or prayers of your brethren in the kingdom and patience of Jesus, on this side the channel; and it will yield me substantial pleasure to afford personal assistance in your pious labors. But, for the present, I am sorry to say, I must decline your proposal: being engaged to spend a month in London this autumn, on the business of our *Mission Society*, of which you have probably heard.

"When I formed my present connections with the church in Birmingham, I proposed an annual freedom for six weeks from my pastoral duties; and should the 'Evangelical Society' express a wish for my services the ensuing year, I am perfectly inclined, God willing, to spend that time beneath their direction, and at what part of the year they conceive a visit would be most serviceable to the good design. I only request, that should this be their desire, I may receive the information as soon as they can conveniently decide, that I may withhold myself from other engagements, which may interfere with the time they may appoint. I entreat you to make my Christian respects acceptable to the gentlemen who compose the society, and assure yourself that I am, dear sir, respectfully and affectionately, Your brother in our Lord Jesus,

"S. P."

The invitation was repeated, and he complied with their request, engaging to go over in the month of June, 1796.

A little before this journey, it occurred to Dr. Ryland, that an itinerating mission into Cornwall might be of use to the cause of true religion, and that two acceptable ministers might be induced to undertake it; and that if executed during the vacation at the Bristol academy, two of the students might supply their place. He communicated his thoughts to Mr. Pearce, who wrote thus in answer:

May 30, 1796.

"My very dear brother—I thank you a thousand times for your last letter. Blessed be God who hath put it into your heart to propose such a plan for increasing the boundaries of Zion. I have read your letter to our wisest friends here, and they heard it with great joy. The plan, the place, the mode, the persons—all, *all* meet our most affectionate wishes. How did such a scheme never enter our minds before! Alas, we have nothing in our hearts that is worth having, save what God puts there. Do write to me when at Dublin, and tell me whether it be resolved on; when they set out, &c. I hope ere long to hear, that as many disciples are employed in Great Britain, as the Saviour employed in Judea. When he gives the word, great will be the company of the preachers.

"Oh, my dear brother, let us go on still praying, contriving, laboring, defending, until 'the little leaven leaveneth the whole lump, and the small stone from the mountain fill the whole earth.'

Number 13.

"What pleasures do those lose who have no interest in God's gracious and holy cause! How thankful should we be, that we are not strangers to the joy which the friends of Zion feel when the Lord turneth again Zion's captivity. I am beyond expression,

"Your affectionate brother in Christ, S. P."

On May 31, he set off for Dublin, and "the Lord prospered his way, so that he arrived at the time appointed; and from every account it appears, that he was not only sent *in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of peace*, but that the Lord himself went with him. His preaching was not only highly acceptable to every class of hearers, but the word came from him with power, and there is abundant reason to believe, that many will, through eternity, praise God for sending his message to them by this dear ambassador of Christ. His memory lives in their hearts, and they join with the other churches of Christ, in deploring the loss they have sustained by his death.

"He was earnestly solicited by the Evangelical Society to renew his visit to that kingdom in 1798. Ready to embrace every call of duty, he had signified his compliance; and the time was fixed; but the breaking out of the late rebellion prevented him from realizing his intention. This was a painful disappointment to many, who wished once more to see his face, and to have heard the glad tidings from his lips."

Such is the brief account of his visit to Dublin, given by Dr. McDowal. The following letter was written to Mrs. Pearce, when he had been there a little more than a week:—

Dublin, June 31, 1796.

"I long to know how you do, and you will be as much concerned to know how I go on at this distance from you. I haste to satisfy your inquiries.

"I am in perfect health: am delightfully disappointed with the place and its inhabitants. I am very thankful that I came over. I have found much more religion here already than I expected to meet with during the whole of my stay. The prospect of usefulness is flattering. I have already many more friends (I hope *Christian* friends) than I can gratify by visits. Many doors are open for preaching the gospel in the city; and my country excursions will probably be few. Thus much for outline.

"But you will like to know how I spend my time, &c. Well then: I am at the house of Mr. H.——, late high sheriff for the city: a gentleman of opulence, respectability, and evangelical piety. He is by profession a Cavinistic Presbyterian; an elder of Dr. McDowal's church; has a most amiable wife, and four children. I am very thankful for being placed here during my stay. I am quite at home, I mean as to ease and familiarity; for as to *style* of living, I neither do, nor desire to equal it. Yet in my present situation it is convenient. It would, however, be sickening and dull, had I not a God to go to, to converse with, to enjoy, and to call *my own*. Oh, 'tis this, *'tis this*, my dearest Sarah, which gives a point to every enjoyment, and sweetens all the cup of life.

"The Lord's day, after I wrote to you last, I preached for Dr. McDowal in the morning at half past eleven; heard a Mr. Kilburne at five; and preached again at Plunket street, at seven. On Tuesday evening, I preached at an hospital, and on Thursday evening, at Plunket street again. Yesterday, for the Baptists in the morning, Dr. McDowal at five, and at Plunket street at seven.

"The hours of worship will appear singular to you: they depend on the usual *meal* times. We breakfast at ten; dine between four and five, some-

times between five and six; take tea from seven to nine; and sup from ten to twelve.

"I thank God that I possess an abiding determination to aim at the *consciences* of the people in every discourse. I have borne the most positive testimony against the prevailing evils of professors here:—as sensuality, gaiety, vain amusements, neglect of the Sabbath, &c. and last night, told an immense crowd of professors of the first rank, 'that if they made custom and fashion their plea, they were awfully deluding their souls; for it had always been the fashion to insult God, to dissipate time, and to pursue the broad road to hell; but it would not lessen their torments there, that the way to damnation was the fashion.'

"I expected my faithfulness would have given them offence; but I am persuaded it was the way to please the Lord, and those whom I expected would be enemies, are not only at peace with me, but even renounce their sensual indulgences to attend on my ministry. I do assuredly believe that God hath sent me hither for good. The five o'clock meetings are miserably attended in general. In a house that will hold 1,500 or 2,000 people, you will hardly see above fifty! Yesterday morning, I preached on the subject of *public worship*, from Psalm v. 7, and seriously warned them against preferring their bellies to God, and their own houses to his. I was delighted and surprised, at the five o'clock meeting, to see the place nearly full. Surely this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in my eyes. Never, never did I more feel how weak I am in myself—a mere nothing; and how strong I am in the omnipotence of God. I feel a superiority to all fear, and possess a conscious dignity in being the ambassador of God. Oh help me to praise, for it is he alone who teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight; and still pray for me; for if he withdraw for a moment, I become as weak and unprofitable as the briars of the wilderness.

"You cannot think how much I am supported by the assurance that I have left a *praying people* at Birmingham; and I believe, that in answer to their prayers I have hitherto been wonderfully assisted in my public work, as well as enjoyed much in private devotion.

"I have formed a most pleasing acquaintance with several serious young men in the university here, and with two of the fellows of the college; most pious gentlemen indeed, who have undergone a world of reproach for Christ and his gospel, and have been forbidden to preach in the churches by the archbishop; but God has raised another house for them here, where they preach with much success, and have begun a meeting in the college, which promises fresh prosperity to the cause of Jesus."

The following particulars, in addition to the above, are taken partly from some notes in his own hand-writing, and partly from the account given by his friend, Mr. Summers, who accompanied him during the latter part of his visits.

At his first arrival, the congregations were but thinly attended, and the Baptist congregation in particular, amongst whom he delivered several discourses. It much affected him to see the whole city given to sensuality and worldly conformity; and especially to find those of his own denomination amongst the lowest, and least affected with their condition. But the longer he continued, the more the congregations increased, and every opportunity became increasingly interesting, both to him and them. His faithful remonstrances, and earnest recommendations of prayer meetings to his Baptist friends, though at first apparently ill received, were well taken in the end; and he had the happiness to see in them some hopeful appearances of a return to God. On June the 20th he wrote to his friend, Mr. Summers, as follows:—

"My dear friend—If you mean to abide by my opinion, I say, come to Dublin, and come directly! I have been most delightfully disappointed. I expected darkness, and behold light: sorrow, and I have had cause for abundant joy. I thank God that I came hither, and hope that many as well as myself, will have cause to praise him. Never have I been more deeply taught my own nothingness; never hath the power of God more evidently rested upon me. The harvest here is great indeed; and the Lord of the harvest hath enabled me to labor in it with delight.

'I praise him for all that is past,
I trust him for all that 's to come.'

"The Lord hath of late been doing great things for Dublin. Several of the young men in the college have been awakened; and two of the fellows are sweet evangelical preachers. One of them is of a spirit serene as the summer evening, and sweet as the breath of May. I am already intimate with them, and have spent several mornings in college with various students, who bid fair to be faithful watchmen on Jerusalem's walls. But I hope you will come; and then you will see for yourself. If not, I will give you some pleasant details when we meet in England. S. P."

Mr. Summers complied with this invitation; and of the last seven or eight days of Mr. Pearce's continuance at Dublin, he himself thus writes:—

"Monday, July 4. At three in the afternoon, I went with my friend, Mr. Summers, to Mr. K——'s. Spent a very agreeable day. Miss A. K—— remarked two wonders in Dublin; a praying society composed of students at college, and another of lawyers. The family were called together. We sung: I read, and expounded the xii. of Isaiah, and prayed. At seven we went to a prayer meeting at Plunket street: very large attendance. Mr. R—— and Mr. S—— prayed, and I spoke from Rom. x. 12, 13. 'There is no difference between the Jew and the Greek; for the same Lord over all is rich unto all who call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved.'—Many seemed affected. After I had closed the opportunity, I told them some of my own experience, and requested, that if any present wished for conversation, they would come to me, either that evening, or on Thursday evening in the vestry. Five persons came in:—one had been long impressed with religion, but could never summons courage enough to open her heart before. Another, a Miss W——, attributed her first impression, under God, to my ministry; and told me that her father had regularly attended of late, and that her mother was so much alarmed as to be almost in despair. Poor girl! she seemed truly in earnest about her own soul, and as much concerned for her parents. The next had possessed a serious concern for some time, and of late had been much revived. One young lady, a Miss H——, staid in the meeting house, exceedingly affected indeed. Mr. K—— spoke to her—she said, she would speak with me on Thursday.

"Tuesday, 5th. Went to Leislip. At seven, preached to a large and affected auditory.

"Wednesday, 6th. Mr. H—— and myself went to Mrs. McG——, to inquire about the young lady who was so much affected at the meeting. Mrs. McG—— said, her mother and sister were pious; that she had been very giddy; but that last Lord's day she was seriously awakened to a sense of sin; had expressed her delight in religion, and fled for refuge to the blood of Jesus. Her sister was introduced to me; a sweetly pious lady. I agreed to

wait for an interview with the young lady at Mr. H——'s, in Eccles street to-morrow.

"Thursday, 7th. Miss H——, her sister, and Mrs. McG——, came to Eccles street. A most delightful interview. Seldom have I seen such proficiency in so short a time. That day week, at Plunket street, she received her first serious impressions. Her concern deepened at Mass Lane, on Lord's day morning—more so in the evening at Plunket street—but most of all on Monday night. I exhorted them to begin a prayer and experience meeting; and they agreed. Blessed be God! this strengthens my hands greatly. At seven o'clock, preached at Plunket street, from Jer. l. 4, 5. 'Going and weeping—they shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward.' A full house and an impressive season. Tarried after the public services were ended, to converse on religion. The most pleasing case was a young man of Mr. D——'s.

"Saturday, 9th. Went with my friend Mr. S——, to call on Miss H——. Found her at her mother's—we first passed the door—she ran out after us—seemed happy; but agitated. Ran and called her mother—soon we saw the door of the parlor open, and a majestic lady appeared; who, as she entered the room, thus accosted me:—'Who art thou, oh blessed of the Lord? Welcome to the widow's house! Accept the widow's thanks for coming after the child whom thou hast begotten in the gospel!' I was too much overcome to do more than take by the hand the aged saint. A solemn silence ensued for a minute or two; when the old lady recovering, expressed the fulness of her satisfaction respecting the reality of the change effected in her daughter, and her gratitude for great refreshment of her own soul, by means of my poor labors. She said, she had known the Lord during forty years, being called under the ministry of John Fisher, in the open air, when on a visit to an officer who was her brother-in-law. She told us much of her experience, and promised to encourage the prayer meeting, which I proposed to be held in her house every Lord's day evening. They are to begin tomorrow after preaching. It was a pleasant meeting; and we returned with pleasure to Eccles street. After we rose up to come away, the old lady affectionately said, 'May the good will of Him who dwelt in the bush, attend you wherever you go, for ever and ever!'"

The young lady some months after wrote to Mr. S——, and says, amongst other things,—"I have great reason to be thankful for the many blessings the Lord has been pleased to bestow upon me, and in particular for his sending Mr. Pearce to this city; and that through his means I have been convinced of sin. I am happy to inform you, that through grace I am enabled to walk in the narrow path. The Lord has taken away all desire for worldly company; all my desires now are to attend on the means of grace. Blessed be his name, I often find him present in them. My mother and I often remember the happy time we spent in your company at our house. She often speaks of it with great pleasure, and blesses the Lord for the change which grace has wrought in me."

"Lord's-day, 10. (The last Sabbath.) Preached in the morning at Mary's abbey, from Job xxxiii. 27, 28. 'He looketh upon men, and if any say I have sinned, and perverteth that which was right, and it profited me not; he will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light.'—A happy season. In the afternoon, having dined with Mr. W——, he took me to Swift's alley, the Baptist place of worship, where I gave an exhortation on brotherly love, and administered the Lord's supper. At Mr. W——'s motion, the church requested me to look out a suitable minister for them. In the evening I preached at Plunket street, from 2 Tim. i. 18. 'The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day!' A very solemn season.

"Monday, 11th. Met the dear Christian friends, for the last time, at a prayer meeting in Plunket street. The Lord was there! Several friends spent the evening with us afterwards at Mr. H——'s.

"Tuesday, 12th. Went aboard at four; arrived at Liverpool on Thursday; and safely at home on Friday, July 15, 1796. Blessed be the Preserver of men, the Saviour of sinners, and the help of his servants, for evermore, amen, amen!"

Some time after, writing to his friend who accompanied him, he says, "I have received several letters from Dublin:—two from Master B. one from Miss H——, one from M——, three or four from the Baptist friends, and some from others, whom I cannot recollect. Mr. K—— lately called on me in his way from Bath to Holyhead. We talked of you, and of our Lord, and did not part till we had presented ourselves before the throne."

During his labors in Dublin, he was strongly solicited to settle in a very flattering situation in the neighborhood;* and a very liberal salary was offered him. On his positively declining it, mention was made of only *six months* of the year. When that was declined, *three months* were proposed; and when he was about to answer this in the negative, the party refused to receive his answer, desiring him to take time to consider of it. He did so; and though he entertained a very grateful sense of the kindness and generosity expressed by the proposal, yet, after the maturest deliberation, he thought it his duty to decline it. Mr. Pearce's modesty prevented his talking on such a subject; but it was known at the time by his friend who accompanied him, and since his death, has been frequently mentioned as an instance of his disinterested spirit.

His friends at Birmingham were ready to think it hard that he should be so willing to leave them to go on a mission among the heathen; but they could not well complain, and much less think ill of him, when they saw that such a willingness was more than could be effected by the most flattering prospects of a worldly nature, accompanied too with promising appearances of religious usefulness.

About a month after his return from Dublin, Mr. Pearce addressed a letter to Mr. Carey, in which he gives some farther account of Ireland, as well as of some other interesting matters:—

Birmingham, Aug. 12, 1796.

"Oh, my dear brother, did you but know with what feelings I resume my pen, freely to correspond with you after receiving your very affectionate letter to myself, and perusing that which you sent by the same conveyance to the society, I am sure you would persuade yourself that I have no common friendship for you, and that your regards are at least returned with equal ardor.

"I fear (I had almost said) that I shall never see your face in the flesh; but if any thing can add to the joy which the presence of Christ, and conformity, perfect conformity to him, will afford in heaven, surely the certain prospect of meeting with my dear brother Carey there, is one of (if not) *the* greatest. Thrice happy should I be, if the providence of God would open a way for my partaking of your labors, your sufferings, and your pleasures on this side the eternal world: but all my brethren here are of a mind, that I shall be more useful at home than abroad; and I, though reluctantly, submit. Yet I am truly with you in spirit. My heart is at Mudna-

* At the *Black Rock*, the residence of some of the most genteel families in the vicinity of Dublin.

patty, and at times I even hope to find my body there: but with the Lord I leave it; *he* knows my wishes, my motives, my regret: *he* knows all my soul; and, depraved as it is, I feel an inexpressible satisfaction that he does know it. However, it is an humbling thought to me, that he sees I am unfit for such a station, and unworthy such an honor as to bear his name among the heathen. But I must be thankful still, that though he appoints me not to a post in foreign service, he will allow me to stand sentinel at home. In this situation may I have grace to be faithful unto death!

"I hardly wonder at your being pained on account of the effects produced on the minds of your European friends, by the news of your engagement in the indigo business, because I imagine you are ignorant of the process of that matter amongst us. When I received the news, I glorified God in sincerity, on account of it, and gave most hearty thanks to him for his most gracious appearance on your behalf: but at the same time I feared, lest through that undertaking, the work of the mission might in some way or other be impeded. The same impression was made on the minds of many others: yet no blame was attached, in our view, to you. Our minds were only alarmed for the future; not disposed to censure for the past. Had you seen a faithful copy of the prayers, the praises, and the conversation of the day in which your letters were read, I know you would not have entertained one unkind thought of the society towards you. Oh no, my dear brother, far be it from us to lay an atom upon your spirits of a painful nature. Need I say, we do love, we do respect you, we do confide too much in you to *design* the smallest occasion of distress to your heart. But I close this subject. In future we will atone for an expression that might bear a harsh construction. We will strengthen, we will support, we will comfort, we will encourage you in your arduous work, all, *all* shall be love and kindness; glory to God and good will to men. If I have done aught that is wrong, as an individual, pardon me: if we have said aught amiss, as a society, pardon us. Let us forbear one another in love, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven us.

"By the time this reaches you, I hope you will have received Nos. I. and II. of Periodical Accounts. Should you find any thing in them, which you think had better be omitted, pray be free in mentioning it, and in future your instructions shall be fully attended to. We have taken all the pains, and used all the caution in our power to render them unexceptionable; but you can better judge in some respects than we. If you should not approve of all (though we are not conscious of any thing that you will disapprove) you will not be offended, but believe we have done our best, and with your remarks, hope to do better still.

"With pleasure, approaching to rapture, I read the last accounts you sent us. I never expected immediate success: the prospect is truly greater than my most sanguine hopes. 'The kingdom of heaven is like to a little leaven hid in three measures of meal, till the *whole* is leavened.' Blessed be God! the leaven is in the meal, and its influence is already discoverable. A great God is doing great things by you. Go on, my dearest brother, go on: God will do greater things than these. Jesus is worthy of a *world* of praise: and shall *Hindostan* not praise him? Surely he shall see of the travail of his soul *there*, and the sower and the reaper shall rejoice together. Already the empire of darkness totters, and soon it shall doubtless fall. Blessed be the laborers in this important work; and blessed be *He* who giveth them hearts and strength to labor, and promises that they shall not labor in vain!

"Do not fear the want of money. *God* is for us, and the silver and the gold are his; and so are the hearts of those who possess the most of it. I will travel from the Land's end to the Orkneys but we will get money enough for all the demands of the mission. I have never had a fear on that head: a little exertion will do wonders; and past experience justifies every confidence. *Men* we only want; and God shall find them for us in due time.

"Is brother Fountain arrived? We hope he will be an acceptable remittance, and, viva voce, compensate for the lack of epistolary communications.

"I rejoice in contemplating a church of our Lord Jesus Christ in Bengal, formed upon his own plan. Why do not the Hindoo converts join it? Lord, help their unbelief! But perhaps the drop is now withheld, that you may by and by have the shower, and lift up your eyes, and say, 'These, whence came they? They fly as clouds, and as doves to their windows.' For three years, we read of few baptized by the first disciples of our Lord; but on the fourth, three thousand, and five thousand openly avowed him. The Lord send *you* such another Pentecost!

"I intend to write my dear brother a long letter. It will prove my *desire* to gratify him, if it do no more. I wish that I knew in what communications your other correspondents will be most deficient: then I would try to supply their omissions.

"I will begin with myself: but I have nothing good to say. I think I am the most vile ungrateful servant that ever Jesus Christ employed in his church. At some times, I question whether I ever knew the grace of God in truth; and at others, I hesitate on the most important points of Christian faith. I have lately had peculiar struggles of this kind with my own heart, and have often half concluded to speak no more in the name of the Lord. When I am preparing for the pulpit, I fear I am going to avow fables for facts, and doctrines of men for the truths of God. In conversation I am obliged to be silent, lest my tongue should belie my heart. In prayer I know not what to say, and at times think prayer altogether useless. Yet I cannot wholly surrender my hope, or my profession. Three things I find, above all others, tend to my preservation:— First, A recollection of a time, when, *at once*, I was brought to abandon the practice of sins, which the fear of damnation could never bring me to relinquish before. Surely, I say, this must be the finger of God, according to the scripture doctrine of regeneration: Secondly, I feel such a consciousness of guilt, that nothing but the gospel scheme can satisfy my mind respecting the hope of salvation:— and Thirdly, I see that what true devotion does appear in the world, seems only to be found among those to whom Christ is precious.

"But I frequently find a backwardness to secret prayer, and much deadness in it; and it puzzles me to see how this can be consistent with a life of grace. However, I resolve, that let what will become of me, I will do all I can for God while I live, and leave the rest to him; and this I usually experience to be the best way to be at peace.

"I believe, that if I were more fully given up to God, I should be free from these distressing workings of mind; and then I long to be a missionary where I should have temptations to nothing but to abound in the work of the Lord, and lay myself entirely out for him. In such a situation, I think pride would have but little food, and faith more occasion for exercise; so that the spiritual life, and inward religion would thrive better than they do now.

"At times, indeed, I do feel, I trust, genuine contrition, and sincerely lament my short-comings before God. Oh the sweets that accompany true repentance! Yes, I love to be abased before God.

'There it is I find my blessing.' May the Lord daily and hourly bring me low, and keep me so!

"As to my public work, I find, whilst engaged in it, little cause to complain for want either of matter or words. My labors are acceptable, and not altogether unprofitable, to the hearers: but what is this to me, if my own soul starves whilst others are fed by me? Oh, my brother, I need your prayers, and I feel a great satisfaction in the hope that you do not forget me. Oh that I may be kept faithful unto death! Indeed, in the midst of my strugglings, a gleam of hope, that I shall at last awake in the likeness of God, affords me greater joy than words can express. To be with Christ, is far better than to continue sinning here: but if the Lord hath any thing to do by me, his will be done.

"I have never so fully opened my case to any one before. Your freedom on similar topics, encourages me to make my complaint to you, and I think if you were near me, I should feel great relief in revealing to you all my heart. But I shall fatigue you with my moanings; so I will have done on this subject.

"It is not long since I returned from a kind of mission to *Ireland*. A society is established in Dublin, for the purpose of inviting from England, ministers of various denominations, to assist in promoting the interest of the kingdom of Christ there. Some of our Baptist brethren had been there before me, as Rippon, Langdon, Francis, and Birt; and I think the plan is calculated for usefulness. I have, at Dr. Rippon's request, sent him some remarks on my visit, for the Register; but as it is probable you will receive this before that comes to hand, I will say something of my excursion here.

"Having engaged to spend six Lord's days in that kingdom, I arrived there the day before the first Sabbath in June. I first made myself acquainted with the general state of religion in Dublin. I found there were four Presbyterian congregations; two of these belong to the southern presbytery, and are Arians or Socinians; the other two are connected with the northern presbytery, and retain the Westminster confession of faith. One of these latter congregations is very small, and the minister, though orthodox, appears to have but little success. The other is large and flourishing: the place of worship ninety feet by seventy, and, in the morning, well filled. Their times of public service are at half past eleven, and five. In the afternoon, the usual congregations are small indeed; for five o'clock is the dining hour in Dublin, and few of the hearers would leave their dinners for the gospel. Dr. McDowal is the senior pastor of this church, a very affectionate, spiritual man. The junior is Mr. Horner. The doctor is a warm friend of the society, at whose request I went over to Ireland.

"There is one congregation of Burgher seceders, and another of Antiburghers. The latter will not hear any man who is not of their own cast; the former are much more liberal. I preached for them once, and they affectionately solicited a repetition of my services.

"Lady Huntingdon's connection has one society here, the only one in the kingdom, perhaps, except at Sligo, where there is another. It is not large, and I fear rather declining. There is not one independent church in the kingdom. There were ten Baptist societies in Ireland: they are now reduced to six; and are, I fear, still on the decline.

"The inhabitants of Dublin seem to be chiefly composed of two classes: the one assume the appearance of opulence; the other exhibit marks of the most abject poverty: and as there are no parishes in Ireland which provide for the poor, many die every year for want of the necessaries of life.

"Most of the rich are by profession protestants; the poor are nearly all papists, and strongly prejudiced against the reformed religion. Their ignorance and superstition are scarcely inferior to your miserable Hindoos. On midsummer day I had an affecting proof of the latter. On the public road, about a mile from Dublin, is a well, which was once included in the precincts of a priory, dedicated to St. John, of Jerusalem. This well is in high repute for curing a number of bodily complaints, and its virtues are said to be most efficacious on the saint's own day. So from twelve o'clock at night, for twenty-four hours, it becomes the rendezvous for all the lame, blind, and otherwise diseased people, within a circuit of twenty miles. Here they brought old and young, and applied the 'holy water,' both internally and externally; some by pouring, some by immersion, and all by drinking: whilst, for the good of those who could not come in person, their friends filled bottles with the efficacious water, to use at home. Several I saw on their knees before the well, at their devotions, who were not unfrequently interrupted with a glass of whiskey. With this they were supplied from a number of dealers in that article, who kept standings all round the well.

"Near the spot, was a church-yard, where great numbers kneeled upon the tombs of their deceased relatives, and appeared earnestly engaged in praying for the repose of their souls.

"It was truly a lamentable sight. My heart ached at their delusions, whilst I felt gratitude, I hope unfeigned, for an acquaintance with the water of life, of which, if a man drink, he shall live for ever.

"There are few, or none, of the middle class to connect the rich and the poor; so that favorable access to them is far more difficult than to the lower orders of the people in England; and their priests hold them in such bondage, that if a catholic servant only attend on family worship in a protestant house, penance must be performed for the offence.

"S. P."

Mention has already been made of his having "formed a pleasing acquaintance with several serious young gentlemen of the university of Dublin."* The following letter was addressed to one of them, the Rev. Mr. Matthias, a few months after his return:—

"Dear brother Matthias—I have been employed this whole day in writing letters to Dublin; and it is the first day I have been able to redeem for that purpose. I will not consume a page in apology.—Let it suffice to say, that necessity, not disinclination, has detained from my Irish friends, those proofs of my gratitude and esteem, which in other circumstances I ought to have presented three months ago. I thought this morning of answering all their demands before I slept: but I have written so many sheets, and all full, that I find my eyes and my fingers both fail; and I believe this must close my intercourse with Dublin this day. When I shall be able to complete my purpose, I do not know. To form friendships with good men is pleasant; but to maintain *all that communion*, which friendship expects, is in some cases very difficult. Happy should I be, could I meet my Irish friends in propria persona, instead of sitting in solitude, and maintaining, by the tedious medium of the pen, this distant intercourse. But 'the Lord, he shall choose our inheritance for us.' Were all the planets of our system embodied, and placed in close association, the light would be greater, and the object grander; but then, usefulness and systematic beauty consist in their dispersion: and what are we, my brother, but so many satellites to Jesus, the great sun of the Christian system? Some, indeed, like burning

* Page 386.

Mercuries, keep nearer the luminary, and receive more of its light and heat, whilst others, like the ringed planet, or the Georgium Sidus, preserve a greater distance, and reflect a greater portion of his light: yet if, amidst all this diversity, *they belong to the system*, two things may be affirmed of all; all keep true to one centre, and borrow whatever light they have from one source. True it is, that the further they are from the sun, the longer are they in performing their revolutions: and is not this exemplified in us? The closer we keep to Jesus, the more brilliant are our graces, the more cheerful and active are our lives; but alas, we are all comets; we all move in eccentric orbs: at one time glowing beneath the ray divine, at another freezing and congealing the icicles. 'Oh what a miracle to man is man!'

"Little did I think, when I began this letter, that I should have thus indulged myself in allegory; but true friendship, I believe, always dictates extempore; and my friends must never expect from me a studied epistle. They can meet with better thoughts, than I can furnish them with, in any bookseller's shop. It is not the dish, however well it may be cooked, that gives the relish, but the sweet sauce of friendship; and this I think sometimes makes even nonsense palatable.

"But I have some questions to put to you; first, how are all my college friends, Messrs. Walker, Maturin, Hamilton, &c.? How is their health? But chiefly, how are the interests of religion among you? Are any praying students added to your number? Do all those you thought well of, continue to justify their profession? You know what it is that interests me. Pray tell me all, whether it makes me weep, or rejoice.

"I hope Mr. H—'s ministry was blessed in Dublin. Do you know any instances of it? We must sow in hope, and I trust that we shall all gather the fruit of eternal life, even where the buddings have never appeared to us in this world. How is it with your own soul? I thank God I never, I think, rejoiced habitually so much in him as I have done of late. '*God is love.*' That makes me happy. I rejoice that God reigns; that he reigns over all; that he reigns over me; over my crosses, my comforts, my family, my friends, my senses, my mental powers, my designs, my words, my preaching, my conduct; that he is *God over all* blessed for ever. I am willing to live, yet I long to die, to be freed from all error, and all sin. I have nothing else to trouble me; no other cross to carry. The sun shines without, all day long; but I am sensible of internal darkness. Well, through grace it shall all be light by and by. Yes, you and I shall be angels of light, all Mercuries then; all near the sun; always in motion; always glowing with zeal and flaming with love. Oh for the new heavens and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness!

'Oh what love and concord there,
And what sweet harmony
In heaven above, where happy souls
Adore thy majesty.
Oh how the heavenly choirs all sing
To him who sits enthron'd above,
What admiring!
And aspiring!
Still desiring:—
Oh how I long to see this feast of love!'

"Will you tell brother M—— that I wait an opportunity to send a parcel to him? In that I will enclose a letter. My very affectionate respects to him, and Mr. H——, with all my college friends, as though named. If you be not weary of such an eccentric correspondent, pray do not be long ere you write to your unworthy, but affectionate brother in Christ, S. P."

Awhile after this, he thus writes to his friend, Mr. Summers:

"December, 1796. I rejoice that you have been supported under, and brought through your late trials. I do not wonder at it, for it is no more han God has promised; and though we may well wonder that he promises any thing, yet his performance is no just ground of surprise; and when we find ourselves so employed, we had better turn our wender to our own unbelief, that for one moment suspected God would not be as good as his word.

"I have been lately more than ever delighted with the thought, that God *hath engaged* to do any thing for such worms as we. I never studied the deistical controversy so much, nor ever rejoiced in revelation more. Alas! what should we know, if God had not condescended to teach us. Paul very justly remarks, that no one knoweth any thing of God, but the Spirit of God, and he to whom the Spirit revealeth him. Now the Spirit hath revealed God in the Bible, but to an unbeliever the Bible is a sealed book. He can know nothing from a book that he looks upon as an imposture, and yet there is no other book in which God is revealed; so that to reject the Bible, is to immerse ourselves in darkness, and whilst professing to be wise, actually to become a fool; whereas, no sooner do we believe what the Spirit saith, than unto us is God revealed, and 'in his light do we see light.' S. P."

To the above may be added, a few extracts of letters, which he addressed to his friends in 1797, and 1798.

TO DR. RYLAND.

March, 1797.

"During the last three weeks, I have at times, been very poorly, in colds, &c. Am better now, and have been all along assisted in going through my public duties. Let us continue to pray for each other, till death makes it a needless service. How uncertain is life, and what a blessing is death to a saint! I seem lately to feel a kind of *affection* for death. Methinks if it were visible, I could embrace it. 'Welcome herald, that bids the prisoner be free; that announces the dawn of everlasting day; that bids the redeemed come to Zion with everlasting joy, to be beyond the reach of an erroneous judgment, and a depraved heart. To believe, to feel, to speak, to act *exactly* as God will have me; to be wholly absorbed and taken up with him; this, this, nothing short of this can make my bliss complete. But *all this is mine*. Oh the height, the depth, the length, the breadth of redeeming love! It conquers my heart, and constrains me to yield myself a living sacrifice, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

"My dear brother, we have had many happy meetings upon earth: the best is in reserve.

'No heart upon earth can conceive
The bliss that in heaven they share;
Then, who this dark world would not leave,
And cheerfully die to be there!'

"Oh how full of love, and joy, and praise, shall we be when that happy state is ours! Well, yet a little while, and He that shall come, will come. Even so come, Lord Jesus! My dear brother, forgive the hasty effusions of a heart that loves you in the bowels of Jesus, and is always happy in testifying itself to be affectionately yours, S. P."

TO MR. CAVE,

On the falling away of some who had promised fair in religion.

——1797.

"I thank you my dear brother, for the confidence you repose in me, the affection you have for me,

and the freedom with which you write to me. Assure yourself that I sincerely sympathize in the cutting events which you have lately experienced. Trying indeed! Your heart must bleed. Yet be not discouraged in your work. The more *Satan* opposes *Christ*, the more let *us* oppose *him*. He comes with great violence because his time is short. His kingdom is on the decline; his strong holds are besieged, and he knows they must soon be taken. Whilst it lasts, he is making desperate sallies on the armies of the Lamb. It is no great wonder that he fights and wounds a raw recruit now and then, who strays from the camp, and thoughtless of the danger, keeps not close by the Captain's tent. I hope our glorious Leader will heal the wounded, and secure the captive. He is sure to make reprisals. Christ will have ten to one. You will yet see his arm made bare. He shall go forth like a man of war. The prisoners shall be redeemed, and the old tyrant shall be cast into the bottomless pit. Be of good cheer, my fellow soldier. The cause is not ours, but God's. Let us endure hardness, and still fight the good fight of faith. At last we shall come off conquerors, through Him who hath loved us.

"I hope you have some causes for joy, as well as grief. I trust though one, or two, or three fall, the tens, and the twenties stand their ground. Oh do what you can to cheer them under the common trial. Let them not see a faint heart in *you*. Fight manfully still. Tell them to watch the more; to pray the harder; to walk the closer with God. So out of the eater shall come forth meat, and sweetness out of the strong. S. P."

TO MR. BATES, AND MRS. BARNES,

Who had been burnt out of their residence.

"The many expressions of Christian friendship which I received from you, and your affectionate families, during my last visit to London, will often excite grateful recollection in future, as they have almost daily since I parted from you; and though I do not write this avowedly as a mere letter of acknowledgment, yet I wish to assure you, that I am not forgetful of my friends, nor unthankful for their kindness. May all the favor you show to the servants of our common Lord for his sake, be amply recompensed in present peace, and future felicity, when the promise of Him who cannot lie, shall be fulfilled. 'A cup of cold water given to a disciple, in the name of a disciple, shall not lose its reward.'

"But, whilst you, my dear friends, live 'in hope of the glory' that remains 'to be revealed,' I am persuaded that you expect *all* as the fruit of sovereign mercy, which first forms us to the mind of Christ, then accepts, and then rewards. Truly, if sinners be rewarded, it must be 'of grace, and not of debt.' Yet it is a mercy of unspeakable magnitude, that grace should establish a connection, between obedience and enjoyment; such a connection as at once insures joy to the believer, and glory to Christ.

"Oh that our thoughts, our affections, our desires may be much in heaven! *Here*, you have been taught, is 'no continuing city,' no certain place of abode; and though you have been taught it awfully in flames, yet if you learn it effectually, the terror of the means will be conquered by the excellency and glory of the consequences. Yes, my friends, 'in heaven we have a better and enduring substance:' the apartments there are more spacious; the society more sweet; the enjoyments more perfect; and all to last for ever. Well may Christians 'rejoice in hope of the glory of God!' S. P."

TO MR. AND MRS. BOWYER, PALL MALL.

November 17, 1797.

"Blessed be 'the Preserver of men,' for all his goodness to dear Mr. and Mrs. B. With theirs shall my gratitude also ascend, whilst separated from their society; and with theirs, shall it more warmly and permanently ascend when we meet to form a part of the general assembly, the church of the first born.

"I do not return to London this autumn, but I mean to visit Portsmouth. I must be indebted to you for my directions. We shall be very happy to see you at Luke street: but *Wales* I suppose will be the vortex that will swallow up much of your time. Well, so *you* are happy, we must be disinterested enough to be satisfied, although we be denied a personal participation.

"Let us not forget that we are Christians; and Christians profess a hope of a better country than *Cambria* contains. *There*, we all belong. Already citizens by privilege, we shall be by possession soon.

'Roll swifter round, ye wheels of time,
And bring the welcome day.'

"In hope of greeting you both in that good land, I remain, most affectionately yours, S. P."

TO DR. RYLAND.

November 17, 1797.

"I feel much for you in relation both to the duties and trials of your present situation: at the same time I bless God who fixed you in it, because I am persuaded that it will be for his glory in the churches of Christ. And though none but those, whose hands are full of religious concerns, can guess at your difficulties; yet our blessed Redeemer knows them all. Oh, my brother, you are travailing for Him, who redeemed you by his blood; who sympathizes with you, and who will graciously crown you at last. Small as my trials are, I would turn smith, and work at the anvil and the forge, rather than bear them for any other master than *Christ*. Yet were they ten thousand times as many as they are, the thought of their being for him, I trust, would sweeten them all.

"I have reason to be very thankful for much pleasure of late, both as a Christian and a minister. I have never felt so deeply my need of a Divine Redeemer, and seldom possessed such solid confidence that he is mine. I want more and more to become a little child, to dwindle into nothing in my own esteem, to renounce my own wisdom, power and goodness, and simply look to, and live upon Jesus for all. I am ashamed that I have so much pride, so much self-will. Oh my Saviour! make me 'meek and lowly in heart;' in this alone I find 'rest to my soul.'

"I could say much of what Immanuel has done for my soul; but I fear lest even this should savor of vanity. When shall I be like my Lord! Oh welcome death, when I have nothing more to do for Christ! To him, till then, may I live every day and every hour! Rather may I be annihilated than not live to him!

"You will rejoice with me to hear that we have a pleasing prospect as a church. Several very hopeful, and some very valuable characters are about to join us. Lord carry on thy work!

"S. P."

TO MRS. PEARCE,

On the dangerous illness of one of the children.

Portsmouth, January 29, 1798.

"Ignorant of the circumstances of our dear child, how shall I address myself to her dearer mother! With a fluttering heart, and a trembling hand, I, in this uncertainty, resume my pen. One consideration tranquillizes my mind—I and mine are in the hands of *God:* the wise, the good, the indulgent Parent of mankind! Whatever *he* does is

best. I am prepared for all his will, and hope that I shall never have a feeling, whose language is not, 'Thy will be done.'

"I am most kindly entertained here by Mr. and Mrs. Shoveller: and, except my dear Sarah's presence, feel myself at home. *They* have had greater trials than *we* can at present know. They have attended *seven* children to the gloomy tomb: they have been supported beneath their loss, by Him who hath said, 'As thy days, so shall thy strength be.' Mrs. S. tells me, she 'blessed God for all.' May my dear Sarah be enabled to do the same, whatever the result may prove. To-morrow I expect another letter from you; yet lest you should too much feel my absence, I will not delay forwarding this a single post. O that it may prove in some degree a messenger of consolation!

"Yesterday I preached three times; God was very good. I received your letter before the first service: you may be assured that I bore you on my heart in the presence of my Lord and yours; nor shall I pray in vain. He will either restore the child, or support you under the loss of it. I dare not pray with importunity for any *earthly good*; for 'who knoweth what is good for man in this life, all the days of his vain life which he spendeth as a shadow?' But *strength* to bear the loss of earthly comforts, he has *promised*; for *that* I importune; and *that*, I doubt not, will be granted.

"In a house directly opposite to the window before which I now write, a *wife*, a *mother*, is just departed. Why am I not a bereaved husband? Why not my children motherless? When we compare our condition with our wishes, we often complain: but if we compare it with that of many around us, our complaints would be exchanged for gratitude and praise. S. P."

TO R. BOWYER, ESQ.

February 14, 1798.

"Not a day has hurried by, since I parted with my dear friends in Pall Mall, but they have been in my affectionate remembrance; but not being able to speak with any satisfaction respecting our dear child, I have withheld myself from imparting new anxieties to bosoms already alive to painful sensibility.

"At length, however, a gracious God puts it in my power to say that there is hope. After languishing between life and death for many days she now seems to amend. We flatter ourselves that she has passed the crisis, and yet will be restored to our arms; but parental fears forbid too strong a confidence. It may be that our most merciful God saw that the shock of a sudden removal would be too strong for the tender feelings of a mother; and so by degrees, prepares for the stroke which must fall at last. However, she is in the best hands, and we are, I hope, preparing for submission to whatever may be the blessed will of God.

"I was brought home in safety, and feel myself in much better health in consequence of my journey. Oh that it all may be concentrated to my Redeemer's praise!

"Happy should I be, if I could oftener enjoy your friendly society; but we must wait for the full accomplishment of our social wishes, till we come to that better world, for which divine grace is preparing us—there our best, our brightest hopes, and there our warmest affections must be found. Could we have all we want below, we should be reluctant to ascend, when Jesus calls us home. No, this is not our rest; it is polluted with sin, and dashed with sorrow; but though our pains in themselves are evil, yet our God turns the curse into a blessing, and makes all that we meet with accomplish our good.

"What better can I wish, my friends, than the humble place of Mary, or the happy rest of John! Faith can enjoy them both, till actually we fall at the Saviour's feet, and lean upon his bosom, when we see him as he is.

'Oh the delights, the heav'nly joys,
The glories of the place,
Where Jesus sheds the brightest beams
Of his o'erflowing grace.'

"S. P."

CHAPTER IV.

An account of his last affliction, and the holy and happy exercises of his mind under it.

EARLY in October, 1798, Mr. Pearce attended at the Kettering minister's meeting, and preached from Psalm xc. 16, 17. "Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto thy children. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us; and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it." He was observed to be singularly solemn and affectionate in that discourse. If he had known it to be the last time that he should address his brethren in that part of the country, he could scarcely have felt or spoken in a more interesting manner. It was a discourse full of instruction, full of holy unction, and that seemed to breathe an apostolical ardor. On his return, he preached at Market Harborough; and riding home the next day in company with his friend, Mr. Summers, of London, they were overtaken with rain. Mr. Pearce was wet through his clothes, and towards evening complained of a chilliness. A slight hoarseness followed. He preached several times after this, which brought on an inflammation, and issued in a consumption. It is probable that if his constitution had not been previously impaired, such effects might not have followed in this instance. His own ideas on this subject, are expressed in a letter to Dr. Ryland, dated December 4, 1798, and in another to Mr. King, dated from Bristol, on his way to Plymouth, March 30, 1799. In the former, he says: "Ever since my Christmas journey last year to Sheepshead, Nottingham, and Leicester, on the mission business, I have found my constitution greatly debilitated, in consequence of a cold caught after the unusual exertions which circumstances then demanded; so that from a frame that could endure any weather, I have since been too tender to encounter a single shower without danger; and the duties of the Lord's day, which as far as bodily strength went, I could perform with little fatigue, have since frequently overcome me. But the severe cold I caught in my return from the last Kettering minister's meeting has affected me so much, that I have sometimes concluded I must give up preaching entirely; for though my head and spirits are better than for two years past, yet my stomach is so very weak, that I cannot pray in my family without frequent pauses for breath; and in the pulpit it is labor and agony, which must be felt to be conceived of. I have, however, made shift to preach sometimes thrice, but mostly only twice on a Lord's day, till the last, when the morning sermon only, though I delivered it with great pleasure of mind, and with as much caution as to my voice as possible, yet cost me so much labor as threw me into a fever till the next day, and prevented my sleeping all night." In the letter he writes thus: "Should my life be spared, I and my family, and all my connections will stand indebted, under God, to you. Unsuspecting of danger myself, I believe I should have gone on with my exertions, till the grave had received me. Your attention sent Mr. B. (the apothecary) to me, and then first I learned, what I have since been increasingly convinced of—*that I was rapidly destroying the vi-*

tal principle. And the kind interest you have taken in my welfare ever since, has often drawn the grateful tear from my eye. May the God of heaven and earth reward your kindness to his unworthy servant, and save you from all the evils from which your distinguished friendship would have saved me."

Such were his ideas. His labors were certainly abundant; perhaps too great for his constitution: but it is probable that nothing was more injurious to his health, than a frequent exposure to night air, and an inattention to the necessity of changing damp clothes.

Hitherto we have seen in Mr. Pearce, the active, assiduous, and laborious servant of Jesus Christ; but now we see him laid aside from his work, wasting away by slow degrees, patiently enduring the will of God, and cheerfully waiting for his dissolution. And as here is but little to narrate, I shall content myself with copying his letters, or extracts from them, to his friends, in the order of time in which they were written, only now and then dropping a few hints to furnish the reader with the occasions of some of them.

TO DR. RYLAND.

Birmingham, October 8, 1798.

"Oh! my dear brother, your letter of the 5th which I received this morning, has made me thankful for all my pulpit agonies, as they enable me to weep with a weeping brother. They have been of use to me in other respects; particularly, in teaching me the importance of attaining and maintaining that spirituality and pious ardor, in which I have found the most effectual relief; so that, on the whole, I must try to 'glory in tribulations also.' I trust I often can when the conflict is past; but to glory '*in*' them, especially in mental distress—hic labor, hoc opus est.

"But how often has it been found, that when ministers have felt themselves most embarrassed, the most effectual good has been done to the people. Oh for hearts entirely resigned to the will of God.

"How happy should I be, could I always enjoy the sympathies of a brother, who is tried in these points, as I of late have been. S. P."

TO MR. FULLER.

Birmingham, October 29, 1798.

"I caught a violent cold in returning from our last committee meeting, from which I have not yet recovered. A little thing now affects my constitution, which I once judged would be weather and labor proof for at least thirty years, if I lived so long, I thank God that I am not debilitated by iniquity. I have lately met with an occurrence which occasioned me much pain and perplexity. **** Trials soften our hearts and make us more fully prize the dear few, into whose faithful sympathizing bosoms we can with confidence pour our sorrows. I think I should bless God for my afflictions, if they produced no other fruits than these—the tenderness they inspire, and the friendships they enjoy. Pray, my dear brother, for yours affectionately, S. P."

To a young man who had applied to him for advice, how he should best improve his time previous to his going to the Bristol academy.

Birmingham, November 13, 1798.

"My dear M.—I can only confess my regret at not replying to yours at a much earlier period, and assure you that the delay has been accidental, and not designed. I feel the importance of your request for advice. I was sensible it deserved some consideration before it was answered. I was full of business at the moment. I put it by, and it was forgotten; and now it is too late. The time of your going to Bristol draws nigh. If instead of an opinion respecting the best way of occupying your time before you go, you will accept a little counsel during your continuance there, I shall be happy at any time to contribute such a mite as my experience and observation have put in my power.

"At present, the following rules appear of so much moment, that were I to resume a place in any literary establishment, I would religiously adopt them as the standard of my conduct:—First, I would cultivate a spirit of habitual devotion. Warm piety connected with my studies, and especially at my entrance upon them, would not only assist me in forming a judgment on their respective importance, and secure the blessing of God upon them; but would so cement the religious feeling with the literary pursuit, as might abide with me for life. The habit of uniting these, being once formed, would, I hope, be never lost; and I am sure that without this, I shall both pursue trivial and unworthy objects, and those that are worthy I shall pursue for a wrong end.—Secondly, I would determine on a uniform submission to the instructions of my preceptor, and study those things which would give him pleasure. If he be not wiser than I am, for what purpose do I come under his care? I accepted the pecuniary help of the society on condition of conformity to its will; and it is the society's will that my tutor should govern me. My example will have influence; let me not, by a single act of disobedience, or by a word that implicates dissatisfaction, sow the seeds of discord in the bosoms of my companions.—Thirdly, I would pray and strive for the power of self-government, to form no plan, to utter not a word, to take no step under the mere influence of passion. Let my judgment be often asked, and let me always give it time to answer. Let me always guard against a light or trifling spirit: and particularly as I shall be amongst a number of youths, whose years will incline them all to the same frailty.—Fourthly, I would in all my weekly and daily pursuits observe the strictest order. Always let me act by a plan. Let every hour have its proper pursuit; from which let nothing but a settled conviction that I can employ it to better advantage, ever cause me to deviate. Let me have fixed time for prayer, meditation, reading, languages, correspondence, recreation, sleep, &c.—Fifthly, I would not only assign to every hour its proper pursuit, but what I did, I would try to do it with all my might. The hours at such a place are precious beyond conception, till the student enters on life's busy scenes. Let me set the best of my class ever before me, and strive to be better than they. In humility and diligence, let me aim to be the first.—Sixthly, I would particularly avoid a *versatile habit.* In all things I would persevere. Without this, I may be a gaudy butterfly, but never like the bee, will my hive bear examining. Whatever I take in hand, let me first be sure I understand it, then duly consider it, and if it be good, let me adopt and use it.

"To these, my dear brother let me add three or four things more minute, but which I am persuaded will help you much—*Guard against a large acquaintance while you are a student.* Bristol friendship, while you sustain that character, will prove a vile thief, and rob you of many an invaluable hour. —*Get two or three of the students, whose piety you most approve, to meet for one hour in a week for experimental conversation and mutual prayer.* I found this highly beneficial, though strange to tell, by some we were persecuted for our practice!—*Keep a diary.* Once a week, at farthest, call yourself to an account: What advances you have made in your studies; in divinity, history, languages, natural philosophy, style, arrangement; and amidst all, do not forget to inquire: Am I more fit to *serve* and to *enjoy* God than I was last week? S. P."

On December 2, 1798, he delivered his last sermon. The subject was taken from Dan. x. 19. "Oh man, greatly beloved, fear not, peace be unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong. And when he had spoken unto me, I was strengthened, and said, Let my Lord speak; for thou hast strengthened me."—"Amongst all the Old Testament saints," said he, in his introduction to that discourse, "there is not one whose virtues were more, and whose imperfections were fewer, than those of Daniel. By the history given of him in this book, which yet seems not to be complete, he appears to have excelled among the excellent." Doubtless no one was farther from his thoughts than himself; several of his friends, however, could not help applying it to him, and that with a painful apprehension of what followed soon after.

TO MR. CAVE, LEICESTER.

Birmingham, December 4, 1798.

"——Blessed be God, my mind is calm; and though my body be weakness itself, my spirits are good, and I can write as well as ever, though I can hardly speak two sentences without a pause. All is well, brother! all is well, for time and eternity. My soul rejoices in the everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure. Peace from our dear Lord Jesus be with your spirit, as it is (yea, more also) with your affectionate brother, S. P."

TO DR. RYLAND.

Birmingham, Lord's day evening, Dec. 9, 1798.

"My dear brother—After a Sabbath (such an one I never knew before) spent in an entire seclusion from the house and ordinances of my God, I seek Christian converse with you, in a way in which I am yet permitted to have intercourse with my brethren. The day after I wrote to you last, my medical attendant laid me under the strictest injunctions not to speak again in public for one month at least. He says that my stomach has become so irritable, through repeated inflammations, that conversation, unless managed with great caution, would be dangerous; that he does not think my present condition alarming, provided I take rest—but without that, he intimated my life was in great danger. He forbids my exposing myself to the evening air, on any account, and going out of doors, or to the door, unless when the air is dry and clear; so that I am, during the weather we now have in Birmingham, (very foggy,) a complete prisoner; and the repeated cautions from my dear and affectionate friends, whose solicitude, I conceive, far exceeds the danger, compel me to a rigid observance of the doctor's rules.

"This morning, brother Pope took my place; and in the afternoon, Mr. Brewer, who has discovered uncommon tenderness and respect for me and the people, since he knew my state, preached a very affectionate sermon from 1 Sam. iii. 18. 'It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good.' By what I hear, his sympathizing observations, in relation to the event which occasioned his being then in the pulpit, drew more tears from the people's eyes, than a dozen such poor creatures as their pastor could deserve. But I have, blessed be God! long had the satisfaction of finding myself embosomed in friendship—the friendship of the people of my charge: though I lament that their love should occasion them a pang—but thus it is—our heavenly Father sees that, for our mixed characters, a mixed state is best.

"I anticipated a day of gloom, but I had unexpected reason to rejoice that the shadow of death was turned into the joy of the morning; and though I said, with perhaps before unequalled feeling, 'How amiable are thy tabernacles!' yet I found the God of Zion does not neglect the dwellings of Jacob. My poor wife was very much affected at so novel a thing as leaving me behind her, and so it was a dewy morning; but the Sun of Righteousness soon arose, and shed such ineffable delight throughout my soul, that I could say, 'It is good to be *here*.' Motive to resignation and gratitude also, crowded upon motive, till my judgment was convinced, that I ought to rejoice in the Lord exceedingly, and so my whole soul took its fill of joy. May I, if it be my Saviour's will, feel as happy when I come to die! When my poor Sarah lay at the point of death, for some days after her first lying-in, towards the latter days, I enjoyed such support, and felt my will so entirely bowed down to that of God, that I said in my heart, 'I shall never fear another trial—he that sustained me amidst this flame, will defend me from every spark!' and this confidence I long enjoyed. But that was near six years ago, and I had almost forgotten the land of the Hermonites, and the hill Mizar. But the Lord has prepared me to receive a fresh display of his fatherly care, and his (shall I call it?) punctilious veracity. If I should be raised up again, I shall be able to preach on the faithfulness of God more experimentally than ever. Perhaps some trial is coming on, and I am to be instrumental in preparing them for it: or if not, if I am to depart hence to be no more seen, I know the Lord can carry on his work as well without me as with me. He who redeemed the sheep with his blood, will never suffer them to perish for want of shepherding, especially since he himself is the chief Shepherd of souls. But my *family!* Ah, *there* I find my faith but still imperfect. However, I do not think the Lord will ever take me away, till he helps me to leave my fatherless children in his hands, and trust my widow also with him. 'His love in times past,' and I may add in times *present* too, 'forbids me to think he will leave me at *last*, in trouble to sink.'

"Whilst my weakness was gaining ground, I used to ask myself, how I could like to be laid by? I have dreamed that this was the case, and both awake and asleep, I felt as though it were an evil that could not be borne:—but now, I find the Lord can fit the back to the burden, and though I think I love the thought of serving Christ at this moment better than ever, yet he has made me willing to be . . . . nothing, if he please to have it so; and now my happy heart 'could sing itself away to everlasting bliss.'

"O what a mercy that I have not brought on my affliction by serving the *devil*. What a mercy that I have so many dear sympathizing friends! What a mercy that I have so much dear domestic comfort! What a mercy that I am in no violent bodily pain! What a mercy that I can read and write, without doing myself an injury! What a mercy that my animal spirits have all the time this has been coming on, (ever since the last Kettering meeting of ministers) been vigorous—free from dejection! And which I reckon among the greatest of this day's privileges, what a mercy that I have been able to employ myself for Christ and his dear cause to-day, as I have been almost wholly occupied in the concerns of the (I hope) *reviving* church at Bromsgrove; and the infant church at Cradley! O my dear brother, it is *all* mercy, is it not? O help me then in his praise, for he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever.

"Ought I to apologize for this experimental chat with you, who have concerns to transact of so much more importance, than any that are confined to an individual? Forgive me if I have intruded too much on your time—but do not forget to praise on my behalf a faithful God. I shall now leave room

against I have some business to write about—till then, adieu—but let us not forget, that *this God, is our God for ever and ever*, and will be *our guide* even until death. Amen. Amen. We shall soon meet in heaven. S. P."

December 9, 1798, he was detained from public worship, as appears by the preceding letter to Dr. Ryland, written on that day. The following lines seem to have been composed on the same occasion:

On being prevented by sickness from attending on public worship.

THE fabric of nature is fair,
But fairer the temple of grace;
To saints 't is the joy of the earth—
Oh glorious, beautiful place!

To this temple I once did resort,
With crowds of the people of God;
Enraptur'd, we entered its courts,
And hail'd the Redeemer's abode.

The Father of nature we prais'd,
And prostrated low at his throne;
The Saviour *we lov'd* and ador'd,
Who *lov'd us* and made us his own.

Full oft to the message of peace,
To sinners address'd from the sky,
We listen'd, extolling that grace,
Which set us, once rebels, on high.

Faith clave to the crucified Lamb;
Hope, smiling, exalted its head;
Love warm'd at the Saviour's dear name
And vow'd to observe what he said

What pleasure appear'd in the looks
Of brethren and sisters around;
With transports all seem'd to reflect
On the blessings in Jesus they'd found.

Sweet moments! If aught upon earth
Resemble the joys of the skies,
'Tis thus when the hearts of the flock
Conjoin'd to the Shepherd arise.

But ah! these sweet moments are fled,
Pale sickness compels me to stay
Where no voice of the turtle is heard,
As the moments are hasting away.

My God! thou art holy and good,
Thy plans are all righteous and wise;
Oh help me submissive to wait,
Till thou biddest thy servant arise.

If to follow thee here in thy courts,
May it be with all ardor and zeal,
With success and increasing delight
Performing the whole of thy will.

Or should thou in bondage detain,
To visit thy temples no more,
Prepare me for mansions above
Where nothing exists to deplore:

Where Jesus, the Sun of the place
Refulgent incessantly shines,
Eternally blessing his saints,
And pouring delight on their minds.

There—there are no prisons to hold
The captive from tasting delight;
There—there the day never is clos'd,
With shadows, or darkness, or night.

There myriads and myriads shall meet,
In our Saviour's high praises to join;
Whilst transported we fall at his feet,
And extol his redemption divine.

Enough then! my heart shall no more
Of its present bereavements complain,
Since, ere long, I to glory shall soar,
And ceaseless enjoyments attain!

TO MR. NICHOLS, NOTTINGHAM.

Birmingham, Dec. 10, 1798.

"I am now quite laid by from preaching, and am so reduced in my internal strength, that I can hardly converse with a friend for five minutes without losing my breath. Indeed I have been so ill, that I thought the next ascent would be, not to a pulpit, but to a throne, to the throne of glory. Yes, indeed, my friend, the religion of Jesus will support when flesh and heart fail: and in my worst state of body, my soul was filled with joy. I am now getting a little better, though but very slowly. But fast or slow, or as it may, the Lord doth all things well.

"S. P."

TO R. BOWYER, ESQ.

"———I have overdone myself in preaching. I am now ordered to lie by, and not even to *converse*, without great care; nor indeed, till to-day, have I for some time been able to utter a sentence, without a painful effort. Blessed be God! I have been filled all through my affliction with peace and joy in believing; and at one time, when I thought I was entering the valley of death, the prospect beyond was so full of glory, that but for the sorrow it would have occasioned to some who would be left behind, I should have longed that moment to have mounted to the skies. Oh, my friend, what a mercy that I am not receiving the wages of sin; that my health has not been impaired by vice; but that, on the contrary, I am *bearing in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.* To him be all the praise! Truly I have proved that God is faithful: and most cheerfully would I take double the affliction for one half of the joy and sweetness which have attended it. Accept a sermon which is this day published.*

"S. P."

TO MR. BATES AND MRS. BARNES, MINORIES.

Birmingham, Dec. 14, 1798.

"———I could tell you much of the Lord's goodness during my affliction. Truly 'his right hand hath been under my head, and his left embraced me.' And when I was at the worst, especially, and expected ere long to have done with time, even *then*, such holy joy, such ineffable sweetness filled my soul, that I would not have exchanged that situation for any besides heaven itself.

"Oh, my dear friends, let us live to *Christ*, and lay ourselves wholly out for him whilst we live; and then, when health and life forsake us, he will be the strength of our heart, and our portion for ever. S. P."

About this time, the congregation at Cannon street was supplied for several months by Mr. Ward, who is since gone as a missionary to India: here that amiable young man became intimately acquainted with Mr. Pearce, and conceived a most affectionate esteem for him. In a letter to a friend, dated January 5, 1799, he writes as follows:—

"I am happy in the company of dear brother Pearce. I have seen more of God in him, than in any other person I ever knew. Oh how happy

* The last but one he ever preached, entitled, MOTIVES TO GRATITUDE. It was delivered on a day of national thanksgiving, and printed at the request of his own congregation.

should I be to live and die with him! When well, he preaches three times on a Lord's day, and two or three times in the week besides. He instructs the young people in the principles of religion, natural philosophy, astronomy, &c. They have a Benevolent Society, from the funds of which they distribute forty or fifty pounds a year to the poor of the congregation. They have a Sick Society for visiting the afflicted in general: a Book Society at the chapel: a Lord's-day school, at which betwixt two and three hundred children are instructed. Add to this, missionary business, visiting the people, an extensive correspondence, two volumes of mission history preparing for the press, &c., and then you will see something of the soul of Pearce. He is every where venerated, though but a young man; and all the kind, tender, gentle affections, make him as a little child at the feet of his Saviour.

"W. W."

In February, he rode to the opening of a Baptist meeting house at Bedworth; but did not engage in any of the services. Here several of his brethren saw him for the last time. Soon afterwards, writing to the compiler of these Memoirs, he says—"The Lord's day after I came home, I tried to speak a little after sermon. It inflamed my lungs afresh, and produced phlegm, coughing, and spitting of blood. Perhaps I may never preach more. Well, the Lord's will be done. I thank him that ever he took me into his service: and now, if he sees fit to give me a discharge, I submit."

During the above meeting, a word was dropped by one of his brethren which he took as a reflection, though nothing was farther from the intention of the speaker. It wrought upon his mind, and in a few days after, he wrote as follows:—"Do you remember what passed at B.? Had I not been accustomed to receive *plain, friendly* remarks from you, I should have thought that you meant to insinuate a reproof. If you did, tell me plainly. If you did not, it is all at an end. You will not take my naming it unkind, although I should be mistaken, since affectionate explanations are necessary when suspicions arise, to the preservation of friendship; and I need not say, that I hold the preservation of your friendship in no small account."

The above is copied, not only to set forth the spirit and conduct of Mr. Pearce, in a case where he felt himself aggrieved, but to show in how easy and amiable a manner, thousands of mistakes might be rectified, and differences prevented, by a frank and timely explanation.

TO MR. COMFIELD, NORTHAMPTON.

Birmingham, March 4, 1799.

"I could wish my sympathies to be as extensive as human—I was going to say—(and why not?) as animal misery. The very limited comprehension of the human intelligence forbids this indeed, and whilst I am attempting to participate as far as the news of affliction reaches me, I find the same events do not often produce equal feelings. We measure our sympathies, not by the causes of sorrow, but by the sensibilities of the sorrowful; hence I abound in feeling on *your* account. The situation of your family must have given distress to a president of any character; but in you it must have produced agonies. I know the tenderness of your heart: your feelings are delicately strong. You must feel much, or nothing; and he that knows you, and does not feel much when you feel, must be a brute.

"May the fountain of mercy supply you with the cheering stream! May your sorrow be turned into joy!

"I am sure that I ought to value more than ever your friendship for me. You have remembered me, not merely in my affliction, but in your own Our friendship, our benevolence must never be compared with that of Jesus; but it is truly delightful to see the disciple treading, though at an humble distance, in the footsteps of a Master, who, amidst the tortures of crucifixion, exercised forgiveness to his murderers, and the tenderness of filial piety to a disconsolate mother! When we realize the scene, how much do our imaginations embrace—the persons—the circumstances—the words—'Woman, behold thy son; John, behold thy mother!'

"S. P."

By the above letter, the reader will perceive, that while deeply afflicted himself, he felt in the tenderest manner for the afflictions of others.

TO MR. FULLER.

March 23, 1799.

He was now setting out for Plymouth; and after observing the great danger he was supposed to be in, with respect to a consumption, he adds:—"But thanks be to God, who giveth my heart the victory, let my poor body be consumed, or preserved. In the thought of *leaving*, I feel a momentary gloom: but in the thought of *going*, a heavenly triumph.

'Oh to grace how great a debtor!'

"Praise God with me, and for me, my dear brother, and let us not mind dying any more than sleeping. No, no! let every Christian sing the loudest, as he gets the nearest to the presence of his God. Eternally yours, in Him, who hath washed us both in his blood. S. P."

TO MR. MEDLEY, LONDON.

Under the same date, he says—"My affliction has been rendered sweet, by the supports and smiles of Him whom I have served in the gospel of his Son He hath delivered, he doth deliver, and I trust that he will yet deliver. Living or dying, all is well for ever. Oh what shall I render to the Lord!"

It seems, that in order to avoid wounding Mrs. P.'s feelings, he deferred the settlement of his affairs till he arrived at Bristol; from whence he wrote to his friend, Mr. King, requesting him to become an executor. Receiving a favorable answer, he replied as follows:—

Bristol, April 6, 1799.

"Your letter, just received, affected me too much, with feelings both of sympathy and gratitude, to remain unanswered a single post. Most heartily do I thank you for accepting a service, which friendship alone can render agreeable in the most simple cases. Should that service demand your activities at an early period, may no unforeseen occurrence increase the necessary care! But may the Father of the fatherless, and the Judge of the widows, send you a recompense into your own bosom, equal to all that friendship, to which, under God, I have been so much indebted in life, and reposing on whose bosom, even death itself loses part of its gloom. In you, my children will find another father—in you, my wife another husband. Your tenderness will sympathize with the one, under the most distressing sensibilities; and your prudent counsels be a guide to the others, through the unknown mazes of inexperienced youth. Enough—blessed God! My soul prostrates, and adores thee for such a friend. S. P."

TO MR. FULLER.

Plymouth, April 18, 1799.

"The last time that I wrote to you, was at the close of a letter sent to you by brother Ryland. I did not like that postscript form; it looked so cardlike, as to make me fear that you would deem it unbrotherly. After all, perhaps you thought nothing about it; and my anxieties might arise only from

my weakness, which seems to be constantly increasing my sensibilities. If ever I felt love in its tenderness for my friends, it has been since my affliction. This, in a great measure, is no more than the love of 'publicans and harlots, who love those that love them.' I never conceived myself by a hundred degrees, so interested in the regards of my friends, as this season of affliction has manifested I was; and therefore, so far from claiming any 'reward' for loving them in return, I should account myself a monster of ingratitude, were it otherwise. Yet there is something in affliction itself, which, by increasing the delicacy of our feelings, and detaching our thoughts from the usual round of objects which present themselves to the mind when in a state of health, may be easily conceived to make us susceptible of stronger, and more permanent impressions of an affectionate nature.

"I heard at Bristol, that you and your friends had remembered me in your prayers, at Kettering. Whether the Lord whom we serve, may see fit to answer your petitions on my account or not, may they at least be returned into your own bosoms.

"For the sake of others, I should be happy could I assure you that my health was improving. As to myself, I thank God that I am not without a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better. I find that neither in sickness, nor in health, I can be so much as I wish like him whom I love. 'To die is gain:' Oh to gain that state, those feelings, that character, which perfectly accord with the mind of Christ, and are attended with the full persuasion of his complete and everlasting approbation! I want no heaven but this; and to gain this most gladly would I this moment expire. But if to abide in the flesh be more needful for an individual, of my fellow-men—Lord, let thy will be done; only let Christ be magnified by me, whether in life or death.

"The weather has been so wet and windy since I have been at Plymouth, that I could not reasonably expect to be much better; and I cannot say that I am much worse. All the future is uncertain. Professional men encourage me; but frequent returns appear, and occasional discharges of blood check my expectations. If I speak but for two minutes, my breast feels as sore as though it were scraped with a rough-edged razor; so that I am mute all the day long, and have actually learned to converse with my sister by means of our fingers.

"I thank you for yours of April 4th, which I did not receive till the 12th, the day that I arrived at Plymouth. On the 16th, a copy of yours to brother Ryland came to hand, to which I should have replied yesterday, but had not leisure. I am happy and thankful for your success. May the Lord himself pilot the *Criterion* safely to Calcutta river!

"Unless the Lord work a miracle for me, I am sure that I shall not be able to attend the Olney meeting. It is to my feelings a severe anticipation; but how can I be a Christian, and not submit to God? S. P."

TO MR. W. WARD.

Plymouth, April 22, 1799.

"Most affectionately do I thank you for your letter, so full of information, and of friendship.—To our common Friend, who is gone into heaven, where he ever sitteth at the right hand of God for us, I commend you. Whether I die, or live, God will take care of you till he has ripened you for the common salvation. Then shall I meet my dear brother Ward again; and who can tell how much more interesting our intercourse in heaven will be made, by the scenes that most distress our poor spirits here. Oh, had I none to live for, I had rather die than live, that I may be at once like Him whom I love. But while he insures me grace—why should I regret the delay of glory? No: I will wait his will, who performeth all things for me.

"My dear brother, had I strength, I should rejoice to acquaint you with the wrestlings and the victories, the hopes and the fears, the pleasures and the pangs, which I have lately experienced. But I must forbear. All I can now say is, that God hath done me much good by all, and made me very thankful for all he has done. Alas! I shall see you no more. I cannot be at Olney on the 7th of May. The journey would be my death; but the Lord whom you serve will be with you then, and for ever. My love to all the dear assembled saints, who will give you their benedictions at that solemn season.

"Ever yours, S. P."

TO MR. KING.

Plymouth, April 23, 1799.

"My very dear friend and brother—I have the satisfaction to inform you, that at length my complaint appears to be removed, and that I am, by degrees returning to my usual diet, by which, with the divine blessing, I hope to be again strengthened for the discharge of the duties, and the enjoyment of the pleasures, which await me among the dear people of my charge.

"I am indeed informed by my medical attendant here, that I shall never be equal to the labors of my past years, and that my return to moderate efforts must be made by slow degrees. As the path of duty, I desire to submit; but after so long a suspension from serving the Redeemer in his church, my soul pants for usefulness more extensive than ever, and I long to become an apostle to the world. I do not think I ever prized the ministerial work so much as I now do. Two questions have been long before me. The first was, shall I live or die? The second, if I live, how will my life be spent? With regard to the former, my heart answered, 'It is no matter—all is well—for my own sake, I need not be taught that it is best to be with Christ; but for the sake of others, it may be best to abide in the body—I am in the Lord's hands, let him do by me as seemeth him best for me and mine, and for his cause and honor in the world.' But as to the second question, I could hardly reconcile myself to the thoughts of living, unless it were to promote the interest of my Lord; and if my disorder should so far weaken me, as to render me incapable of the ministry, nothing then appeared before me but gloom and darkness. However, I will hope in the Lord, that though he hath chastened me sorely, yet, since he hath not given me over unto death, sparing mercy will be followed with strength, that I may show forth his praise in the land of the living.

"I am still exceedingly weak; more so than at any period before I left home, except the first week of my lying by; but I am getting strength, though slowly. It is impossible at present to fix any time for my return. It grieves me that the patience of the dear people should be so long tried, but the trial is as great on my part as it can be on theirs, and we must pity and pray for one another. It is now a task for me to write at all, or this should have been longer. S. P."

TO DR. RYLAND.

Plymouth, April 24, 1799.

"Very dear brother—My health is in much the same state as when I wrote last, excepting that my muscular strength rather increases, and my powers of speaking seem less and less every week. I have for the most part, spoken only in whispers for several days past; and even these seem too much for my irritable lungs. My father asked me a question to day; he did not understand me when I whispered; so I was obliged to utter *one word*, and one word

only, a little louder, and that brought on a soreness which I expect to feel till bed time.

"I am still looking out for fine weather: all here is cold and rainy. We have had but two or three fair and warm days since I have been here; then I felt better. I am perfectly at a loss even to guess what the Lord means to do with me; but I desire to commit my ways to him, and be at peace. I am going to-day about five miles into the country (to Tamerton,) where I shall await the will of God concerning me.

"I knew not of any committee meeting of our society to be held respecting Mr. Marshman and his wife. I have therefore sent no vote, and indeed it is my happiness that I have full confidence in my brethren, at this important crisis, since close thinking or much writing always increases my fever, and promotes my complaint.

"My dear brother, I hope you will correspond much with Kettering. I used to be a medium, but God has put me out of the way. I could weep that I can serve him no more; and yet I fear some would be tears of pride. Oh for perfect likeness to my humble Lord! S. P."

TO MR. KING.

Tamerton, May 2, 1799.

"——Give my love to all the dear people at Cannon street. Oh pray that He who afflicts, would give me patience to endure. Indeed, the state of suspense in which I have been kept so long, requires much of it; and I often exclaim, ere I am aware, 'Oh, my dear people! Oh, my dear family! When shall I be restored to you again!' The Lord forgive all the sin of my desires! At times I feel a sweet and perfect calm, and wish ever to live under the influence of a belief in the *goodness* of God, and of all his plans, and all his works. S. P."

The reader has seen how much he regretted being absent at the solemn designations of the missionaries at Olney. He however addressed the following lines to Mr. Fuller, which were read at the close of that meeting, to the dissolving of nearly the whole assembly in tears:—

Tamerton, May 2, 1799.

"——Oh that the Lord, who is unconfined by place or condition, may copiously pour out upon you all the rich effusions of his Holy Spirit on the approaching day! My most hearty love to each missionary, who may then encircle the throne of grace. Happy men! happy women! you are going to be fellow-laborers with Christ himself! I congratulate—I almost envy you; yet I love you, and can scarcely now forbear dropping a tear of love as each of your names passes across my mind. Oh what promises are yours; and what reward! Surely heaven is filled with double joy, and resounds with unusual acclamations at the arrival of each missionary there. Oh be faithful, my dear brethren, my dear sisters, be faithful unto death, and all this joy is yours! Long as I live, my imagination will be hovering over you in Bengal; and should I die, if separate spirits be allowed a visit to the world they have left, methinks mine would soon be at Mudnabatty, watching your labors, your conflicts, and your pleasures, whilst you are always abounding in the work of the Lord. S. P."

TO DR. RYLAND.

Plymouth, May 14, 1799.

"My dear brother—Yours of the 11th instant I have just received, and thank you for your continued concern for your poor unworthy brother.

"I have suffered much in my health since I wrote to you last by the increase of my feverish complaint, which filled me with heat and horror all night, and in the day sometimes almost suffocated me with the violence of its paroxysms. I am extremely weak, and now that warm weather which I came into Devon to seek, I dread as much as the cold, because it excites the fever. I am happy, however, in the Lord. I have not a wish to live or die, but as he pleases. I truly enjoy the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, and would not be without his divine atonement, wherein to rest my soul, for ten thousand worlds. I feel quite weaned from earth, and all things in it. Death hath lost its sting, the grave its horrors; and the attractions of heaven, I had almost said, are sometimes violent.

'Oh to grace how great a debtor!'

"But I am wearied. May all grace abound towards my dear brother, and his affectionate S. P."

TO MR. POPE.

Plymouth, May 24, 1799.

"I cannot write much—this, I believe, is the only letter that I have written (except to my wife) since I wrote to you last. My complaint has issued in a confirmed, slow, nervous fever, which has wasted my spirits and strength, and taken a great part of the little flesh I had when in health away from me. The symptoms have been very threatening, and I have repeatedly thought that let the physician do what he will, he cannot keep me long from those heavenly joys, for which, blessed be God, I have lately been much longing; and were it not for my *dear people and family* I should have earnestly prayed for leave to depart and be with Christ, which is so much better than to abide in this vain, suffering, sinning world.

"The doctors, however, now pronounce my case very hopeful—say there is little or no danger—but that all these complaints require a *great deal of time* to get rid of. I still feel myself on precarious ground, but quite resigned to the will of *Him*, who, unworthy as I am, continues daily to 'fill my soul with joy and peace in believing' Yes, my dear friend! *now* my soul feels the value of a free, full, and everlasting salvation—and what is more, I do *enjoy* that salvation, while I rest all my hopes on the Son of God in human nature, dying on the cross for me. To me now, health or sickness, pain or ease, life or death are things indifferent. I feel so happy in being in the hands of Infinite Love, that when the severest strokes are laid upon me, I receive them with pleasure, because they come from my heavenly Father's hand? 'Oh to grace how great a debtor,' &c. S. P."

TO THE CHURCH IN CANNON STREET.

Plymouth, May 31, 1799.

"To the dear people of my charge, the flock of Christ, assembling in Cannon street, Birmingham their afflicted but affectionate pastor presents his love in Christ Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep.

"My dearest, dearest friends and brethren—Separated as I have been a long time from you, and during that time of separation, having suffered much both in body and mind, yet my heart has still been with you, participating in your sorrows, uniting in your prayers, and rejoicing with you in the hope of that glory, *to* which divine faithfulness has engaged to bring us, and *for* which our heavenly Father, by all his providences, and by every operation of his Holy Spirit, is daily preparing us.

"Never, my dear brethren, did I so much rejoice in our being made 'partakers of the heavenly calling,' as during my late afflictions. The sweet thoughts of glory, where I shall meet my dear Lord Jesus, with all his redeemed ones, perfectly freed from all that sin which now burdens us, and makes

us groan from day to day—this transports my soul, whilst out of weakness, I am made strong, and at times am enabled to glory even in my bodily infirmities, that the power of Christ, in supporting when flesh and heart fail, may the more evidently rest upon me. Oh, my dear brethren and sisters! let me, as one alive almost from the dead, let me exhort you to stand fast in that blessed gospel, which for ten years, I have now preached among you:—the gospel of the grace of God; the gospel of free, full, and everlasting salvation, founded on the sufferings and death of God, *manifest in the flesh.* Look much at this all-amazing scene!

'Behold! a God descends and dies,
To save my soul from gaping hell;'

And then say whether any poor broken-hearted sinner need be afraid to venture his hopes of salvation on such a sacrifice; especially, since He who is thus 'mighty to save,' hath said, that 'whosoever cometh to him he will in no wise cast out.' You, beloved, who have found the peace-speaking virtue of this blood of atonement, must not be satisfied with what you have already known or enjoyed.—The only way to be constantly happy, and constantly prepared for the most awful changes, which we must all experience, is to be constantly *looking* and *coming* to a dying Saviour; renouncing all our own worthiness; cleaving to the loving Jesus as our all in all; giving up every thing, however valuable to our worldly interests, that clashes with our fidelity to Christ; begging that of his fulness we may receive 'grace upon grace,' whilst our faith actually *relies* on his power and faithfulness, for the full accomplishment of every promise in his word that we plead with him, and guarding against every thing that might, for a moment, bring distance and darkness between your souls and your precious Lord. If you *thus live,* (and oh that you may daily receive fresh life from Christ so to do!) 'the peace of God will keep your hearts and minds,' and you will be filled with 'joy unspeakable and full of glory.'

"As a *church,* you cannot conceive what pleasure I have enjoyed in hearing that you are in peace; that you attend prayer meetings; that you seem to be stirred up of late for the honor and prosperity of religion. Go on in these good ways, my beloved friends, and assuredly the God of peace will be with you. Yea, if after all I should be taken entirely from you, yet God will surely visit you, and never leave you, nor forsake you.

"As to my health, I seem on the whole to be still mending, though but very slowly. The fever troubles me often both by day and night; but my strength increases. I long to see your faces in the flesh; yea, when I thought myself near the gates of the grave, I wished, if it were the Lord's will, to depart among those whom I so much loved. But I am in good hands, and all must be right.

"I thank both you and the congregation most affectionately, for all the kindness you have shown respecting me and my family, during my absence. The Lord return it a thousand fold! My love to every one, both old and young, rich and poor, as though named. The Lord bless to your edification the occasional ministry which you enjoy. I hope you regularly attend upon it, and keep together, as 'the horses in Pharaoh's chariot.' I pray much for you: pray, still pray for your very affectionate, though unworthy pastor, S. P."

In a postscript to Mr. King, he says, "I have made an effort to write this letter; my affections would take no denial; but it has brought on the fever."

It seems to have been about this time that he wrote the following lines, which have appeared in several periodical publications, but with many inaccuracies:—

HYMN IN A STORM.

In the floods of tribulation,
While the billows o'er me roll,
Jesus whispers consolation,
And supports my fainting soul:
Thus the lion yields me honey,
From the eater food is given;
Strengthened thus, I still press forward,
Singing as I wade to heaven—
Sweet affliction! sweet affliction,
That brings Jesus to my soul!

Mid the gloom the vivid lightnings
With increased brightness play;
'Mid the thornbrake, beauteous flow'rets
Look more beautiful and gay;
So, in darkest dispensations,
Doth my faithful Lord appear,
With his richest consolations,
To re-animate and cheer.
Sweet affliction! sweet affliction,
Thus to bring my Saviour near!

Floods of tribulation heighten,
Billows still around me roar;
Those that know not Christ—ye frighten,
But my soul defies your pow'r.
In the sacred page recorded,
Thus his word securely stands—
"Fear not, I'm in trouble near thee,
Nought shall pluck thee from my hands."
Sweet affliction! sweet affliction,
That to such sweet words lay claim!

All I meet I find assists me
In my path to heavenly joy,
Where, though trials now attend me,
Trials never more annoy:
Wearing there a weight of glory
Still the path I'll ne'er forget;
But, reflecting how it led me
To my blessed Saviour's seat,
Cry, "affliction! sweet affliction!
Haste! bring more to Jesus' feet!"

Towards the latter end of May, when Mr. Ward and his companions, were just ready to set sail, a consultation concerning Mr. Pearce was held on board the *Criterion,* in which all the missionaries, and some of the members of the Baptist Missionary Society were present. It was well known that he had for several years been engaged in preparing materials for a *History of Missions,* to be comprised in two volumes octavo: and as the sending of the gospel among the heathens had so deeply occupied his heart, considerable expectations had been formed by religious people, of his producing an interesting work on the subject. The question now was, could not this performance be finished by other hands, and the profits of it be appropriated to the benefit of Mr. Pearce's family? It was admitted by all, that this work would, partly from its own merits, and partly from the great interest which the author justly possessed in the public esteem, be very productive; and that it would be a delicate and proper method of enabling the religious public, by subscribing liberally to it, to afford substantial assistance to the family of this excellent man. The result was, that one of the members of the Society addressed a letter to Mr. Pearce's relations, at Plymouth, requesting them to consult him as he should be able to bear it, respecting the state of his manuscripts; and to inquire whether they were in a con-

dition to admit of being finished by another hand; desiring them also to assure him, for his present relief concerning his dear family, that whatever the hand of friendship could effect on their behalf, should be accomplished. The answer, though it left no manner of hope as to the accomplishment of the object, yet is so expressive of the reigning dispositions of the writer's heart, as an affectionate husband, a tender father, a grateful friend, and a sincere Christian, that it cannot be uninteresting to the reader:—

Tamerton, June 24, 1799.

"To use the common introduction of 'dear brother,' would fall so far short of my feelings towards a friend, whose uniform conduct has ever laid so great a claim to my affection and gratitude; but whose recent kindness—kindness in *adversity*—kindness to my *wife*—kindness to my *children*—kindness that would go far to 'smooth the bed of death,' has overwhelmed my whole soul in tender thankfulness, and engaged my everlasting esteem. I know not how to begin.... 'Thought is poor, and poor expression.' The *only* thing that lay heavy on my heart, when in the nearest prospect of eternity, was the future situation of my family. I had but a comparatively small portion to leave behind me, and yet that little was the *all* that an amiable woman—delicately brought up, and, through mercy, for the most part comfortably provided for since she entered on domestic life—with five babes to feed, clothe, and educate, had to subsist on. Ah, what a prospect! Hard and long I strove to realize the promises made to the widows and the fatherless; but *these alone* I could not fully rest on and enjoy. For my own part, God was indeed very gracious. I was willing, I hope, to linger in suffering, if I might thereby most glorify him, and death was an angel whom I longed to come and embrace me, 'cold' as his embraces are. But how could I leave those who were dearest to my heart in the midst of a world, in which, although thousands now professed friendship for me, and on my account, for mine; yet after my decease, would, with few exceptions, soon forget my widow and my children among the crowds of the needy and distressed. It was at this moment of painful sensibility that *your heart* meditated a plan to remove my anxieties—a plan, too, that would involve much personal labor before it could be accomplished. 'Blessed be God, who put it into thy heart, and blessed be thou.' May the blessing of the widow and the fatherless rest on you and yours for ever. Amen, and amen!

"You will regret, perhaps, that I have taken up so much room respecting yourself, but I have scarcely gratified the shadow of my wishes. Excuse, then, on the one hand, that I have said so much, and accept on the other, what remains unexpressed.

"My affections and desires are among my dear people at Birmingham; and unless I find my strength increase here, I purpose to set out for that place in the course of a fortnight, or at most a month. The journey, performed by short stages, may do me good: if not, I expect when the winter comes, to sleep in peace: and it will delight my soul to see them once more before I die. Besides, I have many little arrangements to make among my books and papers, to prevent confusion after my decease. Indeed, till I get home, I cannot fully answer your kind letter; but I fear that my materials consist so much in references, which none but myself would understand, that a second person could not take it up, and prosecute it. I am still equally indebted to you for a proposal so generous, so laborious.

"Rejoice with me, that the blessed gospel still 'bears my spirits up.' I am become familiar with the thoughts of dying. I have taken my leave often with the world; and thanks be to God, I do it *always* with *tranquillity*, and *often* with *rapture*. Oh, what grace, what grace, it was, that ever called me to be a Christian! What would have been my present feelings, if I were going to meet my God with all the filth and load of my sin about me! But God in my nature hath put my sin away, taught me to love him, and long for his appearing. Oh, my dear brother, how consonant is *everlasting praise* with such a great salvation! S. P."

After this another letter was addressed to Mr. Pearce, informing him more particularly that the above proposal did not originate with an individual, but with several of the brethren who dearly loved him, and had consulted on the business; and that it was no more than an act of justice to one who had spent his life in serving the public; also requesting him to give directions by which his manuscripts might be found and examined, lest he should be taken away before his arrival at Birmingham. To this he answered as follows:

Plymouth, July 6, 1799.

"I need not repeat the growing sense I have of your kindness, and yet I know not how to forbear.

"I cannot direct Mr. K—— to *all* my papers, as many of them are in books from which I was making extracts; and if I could, I am persuaded that they are in a state too confused, incorrect, and unfinished, to suffer you or any other friend to realize your kind intentions.

"I have possessed a tenacious memory. I have begun one part of the history; read the necessary books; reflected; arranged; written, perhaps, the introduction; and then, trusting to my recollection, with the revisal of the books as I should want them, have employed myself in getting materials for another part, &c. Thus, till my illness, the volumes existed in my head—my books were at hand, and I was on the eve of writing them out, when it pleased God to make me pause: and, as close thinking has been strongly forbidden me, I dare say, that were I again restored to health, I should find it necessary to go over much of my former reading to refresh memory.

"It is now Saturday. On Monday next we propose setting out on our return. May the Lord prosper our way! Accept the sincere affection, and the ten thousand thanks, of your brother in the Lord, S. P."

As the manuscripts were found to be in such a state, that no person, except the author himself, could finish them, the design was necessarily dropped. The public mind, however, was deeply impressed with Mr. Pearce's worth, and that, which the friendship of a few could not effect, has since been amply accomplished by the liberal exertions of many.

TO DR. RYLAND.

Birmingham, July 20, 1799.

"My very dear brother—Your friendly anxieties on my behalf demand the earliest satisfaction. We had a pleasant ride to Newport on the afternoon we left you, and the next day without much fatigue reached Tewksbury; but the road was so rough from Tewksbury to Evesham, that it wearied and injured me more than all the jolting we had had before put together. However, we reached Alcester on Wednesday evening, stopped there a day to rest, and last night (Friday) were brought safely hither, blessed be God!

"I find myself getting weaker and weaker, and so my Lord instructs me in his pleasure to remove me soon. You say well, my dear brother, that at

such a prospect, I 'cannot *complain*.' No, blessed be His dear name, who shed his blood for me, he helps me to rejoice, at times, with joy unspeakable. Now I see the value of the religion of the cross. It is a religion for a dying sinner. It is all the most guilty, the most wretched can desire. Yes, I taste its sweetness, and enjoy its fulness, with all the gloom of a dying bed before me. And far rather would I be the poor emaciated, and emaciating creature that I am, than be an emperor, with every earthly good about him .... but without a God!

"I was delighted the other day, in reperusing the Pilgrim's Progress, to observe that when Christian came to the top of the hill Difficulty, he was put to sleep in a chamber called Peace. Why, how good is the Lord of the way to me! said I; I have not reached the summit of the hill yet, but notwithstanding he puts me to sleep in the chamber of Peace *every night*. True, it is often a chamber of *pain;* but let pain be as formidable as it may, it has never yet been able to expel that peace, which the great Guardian of Israel has appointed to keep my heart and mind through Christ Jesus.

"I have been laboring lately to exercise most love to God when I have been suffering most severely: but, what shall I say? Alas! too often the sense of pain absorbs every other thought. Yet there have been seasons when I have been affected with such a delightful sense of the loveliness of God as to ravish my soul, and give predominance to the sacred passion. It was never till to-day that I got any personal instruction from our Lord's telling Peter by *what death* he should glorify God. O what a satisfying thought is it, that God appoints those means of dissolution whereby he gets most glory to himself. It was the very thing I needed; for of all the ways of dying, that which I most dreaded was by a consumption; (in which it is now highly probable my disorder will issue.) But, O my dear Lord, *if by this death* I can most *glorify thee*, I prefer it to all others, and thank thee that by this mean thou art hastening my fuller enjoyment of thee in a purer world.

"A *sinless* state! 'O, 'tis a heaven worth dying for!' I cannot realize any thing about heaven, but the presence of Christ and his people, and a perfect deliverance from sin, and I want no more—I am sick of sinning—soon I shall be beyond its power. 'O joyful hour! O blest abode! I shall be near and *like* my God!' I only thought of filling one side—and now have not left room to thank you and dear Mrs. Ryland for the minute, affectionate, and constant attentions you paid us in Bristol. May the Lord reward you. Our hearty love to all around, till we meet in heaven.

"Eternally yours in Christ, S. P."

TO MR. BIRT.

Birmingham, July 26, 1799.

"It is not with common feelings that I begin a letter to *you*. Your name brings so many interesting circumstances of my life before me, in which your friendship has been so uniformly and eminently displayed, that now, amidst the imbecilities of sickness, and the serious prospect of another world, my heart is overwhelmed with gratitude, whilst it glows with affection—an affection which eternity shall not annihilate, but improve.

"We reached Bristol on the Friday after we parted from you, having suited our progress to my strength and spirits. We staid with Bristol friends, till Monday, when we pursued our journey, and went comfortably on, till the uncommonly rough road from Tewksbury to Evesham quite jaded me; and I have not yet recovered from the excessive fatigue of that miserable ride. At Alcester we rested a day and a half, and, through the abundant goodness of God, we safely arrived at Birmingham on Friday evening, the 19th of July.

"I feel an undisturbed tranquillity of soul, and am cheerfully waiting the will of God. My voice is gone, so that I cannot whisper without pain; and of this circumstance I am at times most ready to complain. For, to see my dear and amiable Sarah look at me, and then at the children, and at length bathe her face in tears, without my being able to say one word of comfort—Oh!!..... Yet the Lord supports me under this also; and I trust will support me to the end. S. P."

TO MR. ROCK.

July 28, 1799.

"—— I am now to all appearance within a few steps of eternity. In Christ I am safe. In him I am happy. I trust we shall meet in heaven.

"S. P."

TO R. BOWYER, ESQ.

Birmingham, August 1, 1799.

"Much disappointed that I am not released from this world of sin, and put in possession of the pleasures enjoyed by the spirits of just men made perfect, I once more address my dear fellow heirs of that glory which ere long shall be revealed to us all.

"We returned from Devon last Friday week. I was exceedingly weak, and for several days afterwards got rapidly worse. My friends compelled me to try another physician. I am still told that I shall recover. Be that as it may, I wish to have my own will annihilated, that the will of the Lord may be done. Through his abundant grace, I have been, and still am happy in my soul; and I trust my prevailing desire is, that living or dying I may be the Lord's. S. P."

TO DR. RYLAND.

Birmingham, Lord's day evening, Aug. 4, 1799.

"MY VERY DEAR BROTHER—Still, I trust, hastening to the land 'where there shall be no more curse,' I take this opportunity of talking a little with you on the road, for we are fellow-travellers, and a little conversation by the way will not lose me the privilege of getting first to the end of my journey.

"It is seventeen years within about a week since I first actually set out on my pilgrimage; and when I review the many dangers to which, during that time, I have been exposed, I am filled with conviction that I have all along been the care of Omnipotent love. Ah, how many Pliables, and Timorouses, and Talkatives have I seen, while my quivering heart said, 'Alas! I shall soon follow these sons of apostacy, prove a disgrace to religion, and have my portion with hypocrites at last.'

"These fears may have had their uses—may have made me more cautious, more distrustful of myself, and kept me more dependent on the Lord. Thus

'All that I 've met has worked for my good.'

"With what intricacy, to our view, and yet with what actual skill and goodness, does the Lord draw his plans, and mark out our path! Here we wonder and complain.—Soon we shall all agree that it was a right path to the city of habitation; and what we now most deeply regret, shall become the subject of our warmest praises.

"I am afraid to come back again to life. O how many dangers await me! Perhaps I may be overcome of some fleshly lust—perhaps I may get proud and indolent, and be more of the priest than of the evangelist—surely I rejoice in feeling my outward man decay, and having the sentence of death in myself. O what prospects are before me in the

blessed world whither I am going! To be *holy as God is holy*—to have nothing but holiness in my nature—to be assured without a doubt, and eternally to carry about this assurance with me, that the pure God looks on me with constant complacency, for ever blesses me, and says, as at the first creation, 'It is very good.' I am happy now in hoping in the divine purposes towards me; but I know, and the thought is my constant burden, that the Being I love best, always sees something in me which he *infinitely hates*. 'O wretched, wretched man that I am!' The thought even now makes me weep, and who can help it, that seriously reflects, he never comes to God to pray or praise, but he brings what his God detests, along with him—carries it with him wherever he goes, and can never get rid of it as long as he lives? Come, my dear brother! will you not share my joy, and help my praise, that soon I shall leave this body of sin and death behind, to enter on the perfection of my spiritual nature; and patiently to wait till this natural body shall become a spiritual body, and so be a fit vehicle for my immortal and happy spirit?

"But I must forbear—I have been very unwell all day; but this evening God has kindly given me a respite—my fever is low and my spirits are cheerful, so I have indulged myself in unbosoming my feelings to my dear friend. S. P."

TO R. BOWYER, ESQ.

On his having sent him a print of Mr. Shwartz, the missionary on the Malabar coast.

Birmingham, August 16, 1799.

"On three accounts was your last parcel highly acceptable. It represented a man, whom I have long been in the habit of loving and revering; and whose character and labors I intended, if the Lord had not laid his hand upon me by my present illness, to have presented to the public in Europe, as he himself presented them to the millions of Asia. The execution bearing so strong a likeness to the original, heightened its value. And then, the hand from whence it came, and the friendship it was intended to express, add to its worth. S. P."

TO MR. FULLER.

Birmingham, August 19, 1799.

"The doctor has been making me worse and weaker for three weeks. In the middle of the last week he spoke confidently of my recovery; but to-day he has seen fit to alter his plans; and if I do not find a speedy alteration for the better, I must have done with all physicians, but Him, who 'healeth the broken in heart.'

"For some time after I came home, I was led to believe my case to be consumptive, and then thinking myself of a certainty near the kingdom of heaven, I rejoiced hourly in the delightful prospect.

"Since then, I have been told that I am not in a dangerous way; and though I give very little credit to such assertions in this case, yet I have found my mind so taken up with earth again, that I seem as though I had another soul. My spiritual pleasures are greatly interrupted, and some of the most plaintive parts of the most plaintive Psalms seem the only true language of my heart. Yet, 'Thy will be done,' I trust prevails; and if it be the Lord's will that I linger long, and suffer much, O let him give me the patience of hope, and still his will be done. I can write no more. This is a whole day's work: for it is only after tea that for a few minutes I can sit up, and attend to any thing.

"S. P."

From the latter end of August, and all through the month of September, to the tenth of October, *the day on which he died*, he seems to have been unable to write. He did not, however, lose the exercise of his mental powers; and though in the last of the above letters he complains of darkness, it appears that he soon recovered that peace and joy in God, by which his affliction, and even his life, were distinguished.

A little before he died, he was visited by Mr. Medley, of London, with whom he had been particularly intimate on his first coming to Birmingham. Mr. Pearce was much affected at the sight of his friend; and continued silently weeping for nearly ten minutes, holding and pressing his hand. After this he spoke, or rather, whispered as follows:—"This sick bed is a Bethel to me; it is none other than the house of God, and the gate of heaven. I can scarcely express the pleasures that I have enjoyed in this affliction. The nearer I draw to my dissolution, the happier I am. It scarcely can be called an affliction, it is so counterbalanced with joy. You have lost your pious father; tell me how it was." Here Mr. Medley informed him of particulars. He wept much at the recital, and especially at hearing of his last words,—"Home, home!" Mr. Medley telling him of some temptations he had lately met with, he charged him to keep near to God.—"Keep close to God," said he, "and nothing will hurt you."

The following detached sentences were taken down occasionally by Mrs. Pearce, within four or five weeks of Mr. Pearce's death.

He once said, "I have been in darkness two or three days, crying, O when wilt thou comfort me? but last night the mist was taken from me, and the Lord shone in upon my soul. O that I could but speak, I would tell a world to trust a faithful God. Sweet affliction, now it worketh *glory, glory!*"

Mrs. P. having told him the various exercises of her mind, he replied, "O trust the Lord—if he lifts up the light of his countenance upon you, as he has done upon me this day, all your mountains will become mole-hills. I feel your situation, I feel your sorrows; but he who takes care of sparrows, will care for you and my dear children."

When scorching with burning fever, he said, "Hot and happy." One Lord's day morning he said, "Cheer up, my dear, think how much will be said to-day of the faithfulness of God. Though *we* are called to separate, *he* will never separate from you. I wish I could tell the world what a good and gracious God he is. Never need they, who trust in him, be afraid of trials. He has promised to give strength for the day; that is his promise. O what a lovely God! and he is *my* God and *yours*. He will never leave us nor forsake us—no, never! I have been thinking that this and that medicine will do me good—but what have I to do with it? It is in my Jesus' hands; he will do it all, and there I leave it. What a mercy is it, I have a good bed to lie upon; you, my dear Sarah, to wait upon me; and friends to pray for me! O how thankful should I be for all my pains! I want for nothing: all my wishes are anticipated. O, I have felt the force of those words of David, "Unless thy law (my gracious God!) had been my delight, I should have perished in mine affliction." Though I am too weak to read it, or hear it, I can think upon it, and O how good it is! I am in the best hands I could be in—in the hands of my dear Lord and Saviour, and he will do all things well. Yes, yes, he cannot do wrong."

One morning Mrs. P. asked him how he felt? "Very ill, but unspeakably happy in the Lord and *my* dear *Lord Jesus*." Once beholding her grieving he said, "O my dear Sarah, do not be so anxious, but leave me entirely in the hands of Jesus, and think, if you were as wise as he, you would do the

same by me. If he takes me, I shall not be lost, I shall only go a little before; we shall meet again, never to part."

After a violent fit of coughing he said, "It is all well; O what a good God is he! It is done by him, and it must be well—if I ever recover, I shall pity the sick more than ever, and if I do not, I shall go to sing delivering love; so you see it will be all well.—O for more patience! Well, my God is the God of patience, and he will give me all I need. I rejoice it is in my Jesus' hands to communicate, and it cannot be in better. It is my God who gives me patience to bear all his will."

When after a restless night, Mrs. P. asked him, what she should do for him? "You can do nothing but pray for me, that I may have patience to bear all my Lord's will."—After taking a medicine he said, "If it be the Lord's will to bless it, for your sake, and for the sake of the dear children—but the Lord's will be done. O, I fear I sin, I dishonor God by impatience; but I would not for a thousand worlds sin in a thought if I could avoid it." Mrs. P. replied, she trusted the Lord would still keep him; seeing he had brought him thus far, he would not desert him at last. "No, no," he said, "I hope he will not. As a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. Why do I complain? My dear Jesus' sufferings were much sorer and more bitter than mine: *And did he thus suffer, and shall I repine!* No, I will cheerfully suffer my Father's will."

One morning after being asked how he felt, he replied, "I have but one severe pain about me! What a mercy! O how good a God to afford some intervals amidst so much pain! He is altogether good. Jesus lives, my dear, and that must be our consolation."—After taking a medicine which operated very powerfully, he said, "This will make me so much lower; well, let it be. Multiply my pains, thou good God; so thou art but glorified, I care not what I suffer; all is right."

Being asked how he felt after a restless night, he replied, "I have so much weakness and pain, I have not had much enjoyment; but I have a full persuasion that the Lord is doing all these well. If it were not for strong confidence in a lovely God, I must sink; but all is well. O blessed God, I would not love thee less; O support a sinking worm! O what a mercy to be assured that all things are working together for good."

Mrs. P. saying, If we must part, I trust the separation will not be for ever; "O no," he replied, "we sorrow not as those who have no hope." She said, Then you can leave me and your dear children with resignation, can you? He answered, "My heart was pierced through with many sorrows, before I could give you and the dear children up; but the Lord has heard me say, Thy will be done; and I now can say, blessed be his dear name, I have none of my own."

His last day, Oct. 10, was very happy; Mrs. P. repeated this verse,

> Since all that I meet shall work for my good,
> The bitter is sweet, the med'cine is food,
> Though painful at present, 'twill cease before long,
> And then, O how pleasant the conqueror's song.

He repeated with an inexpressible smile, the last line "*The conqueror's song.*"

He said once, "O my dear! what shall I do? But why do I complain? He makes all my bed in my sickness." She then repeated those lines,

> Jesus can make a dying bed
> Feel soft as downy pillows are.

"Yes," he replied, "he can; he does; I feel it."

CHAPTER V.

General Outlines of his Character.

To develop the character of any person, it is necessary to determine what was his governing principle. If this can be clearly ascertained, we shall easily account for the tenor of his conduct.

The governing principle in Mr. Pearce, beyond all doubt, was HOLY LOVE.

To mention this is sufficient to prove it to all who knew him. His friends have often compared him to *that disciple whom Jesus loved.* His religion was that of the heart. Almost every thing he saw, or heard, or read, or studied, was converted to the feeding of this divine flame. Every subject that passed through his hands seemed to have been cast into this mould. Things, that to a merely speculative mind would have furnished matter only for curiosity, to him afforded materials for devotion. His sermons were generally the effusions of his heart, and invariably aimed at the hearts of his hearers.

For the justness of the above remarks, I might appeal not only to the letters which he addressed to his friends, but to those which his friends addressed to him. It is worthy of notice how much we are influenced in our correspondence by the turn of mind of the person we address. If we write to a humorous character, we shall generally find that what we write, perhaps without being conscious of it, will be interspersed with pleasantries: or if to one of a very serious cast, our letters will be more serious than usual. On this principle, it has been thought, we may form some judgment of our own spirit by the spirit in which our friends address us. These remarks will apply with singular propriety to the correspondence of Mr. Pearce. In looking over the first volume of *Periodical Accounts of the Baptist Mission*, the reader will easily perceive the most affectionate letters from the missionaries are those which are addressed to him.

It is not enough to say of this affectionate spirit, that it formed a prominent feature in his character—it was rather the life-blood that animated the whole system. He seemed, as one of his friends observed, to be baptized in it. It was *holy love* that gave the tone to his general deportment: as a son, a subject, a neighbor, a Christian, a minister, a pastor, a friend, a husband, and a father, he was manifestly governed by this principle; and this it was that produced in him that lovely uniformity of character, which constitutes the true *beauty of holiness.*

By the grace of God he was what he was; and to the honor of grace, and not for the glory of a sinful worm, be it recorded. Like all other men, he was the subject of a depraved nature. He felt it, and lamented it, and longed to depart, that he might be freed from it: but certainly we have seldom seen a character, taking him altogether, "whose excellencies were so many, and so uniform, and whose imperfections were so few." We have seen men rise high in contemplation, who have abounded but little in action. We have seen zeal mingled with bitterness, and candor degenerate into indifference; experimental religion mixed with a large portion of enthusiasm, and what is called rational religion, void of every thing that interests the heart of man. We have seen splendid talents tarnished with insufferable pride, seriousness with melancholy, cheerfulness with levity, and great attainments in religion with uncharitable censoriousness towards men of low degree: but we have not seen these things in our brother Pearce.

There have been few men in whom has been united a greater portion of the contemplative and the active; holy zeal and genuine candor; spiritu-

ality and rationality; talents that attracted almost universal applause, and the most unaffected modesty: faithfulness in bearing testimony against evil, with the tenderest compassion to the soul of the evil doer; fortitude that would encounter any difficulty in the way of duty, without any thing boisterous, noisy, or overbearing; deep seriousness, with habitual cheerfulness; and a constant aim to promote the highest degrees of piety in himself and others, with a readiness to hope the best of the lowest; not *breaking the bruised reed nor quenching the smoking flax.*

He loved the Divine character as revealed in the Scriptures. To adore God, to contemplate his glorious perfections, to enjoy his favor, and to submit to his disposal, were his highest delight. "I felt," says he, when contemplating the hardships of a missionary life, "that were the universe destroyed, and I the only being in it besides God, HE is fully adequate to my complete happiness; and had I been in an African wood, surrounded with venomous serpents, devouring beasts, and savage men, in such a frame, I should be the subject of perfect peace and exalted joy. Yes, O my God! thou hast taught me that *thou alone* art worthy of my confidence; and with this sentiment fixed in my heart, I am freed from all solicitude about my temporal concerns. If thy presence be enjoyed, poverty shall be riches, darkness light, affliction prosperity, reproach my honor, and fatigue my rest!"

He loved the gospel. The truths which he believed and taught, dwelt richly in him, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. The reader will recollect how he went over the great principles of Christianity, examining the grounds on which he rested, in the first of those days which he devoted to solemn fasting and prayer in reference to his becoming a missionary;* and with what ardent affection he set his seal anew to every part of divine truth as he went along.

If salvation had been of works, few men, according to our way of estimating characters, had a fairer claim: but, as he himself has related, he could not meet the king of terrors in this armor.† So far was he from placing any dependence on his own works, that the more he did for God, the less he thought of it in such a way. "All the satisfaction I wish for here," says he, "is to be doing my heavenly Father's will. I hope I have found it my meat and drink to do his work; and can set to my seal, that the purest pleasures of human life spring from the humble obedience of faith. It is a good saying, 'We cannot do too much for God, nor trust in what we do too little.' I find a growing conviction of the necessity of a free salvation. The more I do for God, the less I think of it; and am progressively ashamed that I do no more."

Christ crucified was his darling theme, from first to last. This was the subject on which he dwelt at the outset of his ministry among the Coldford colliers, when "He could scarcely speak for weeping, nor they hear for interrupting sighs and sobs;" this was the burden of the song when addressing the more polished and crowded audiences at Birmingham, London, and Dublin; this was the grand motive exhibited in sermons for the promotion of public charities; and this was the rock on which he rested all his hopes, in the prospect of death. It is true, as we have seen, he was shaken for a time by the writings of a *Whitby* and of a *Priestley*; but this transient hesitation, by the overruling grace of God, tended only to establish him more firmly in the end. "Blessed be his dear name," says he, under his last affliction, "who shed his blood for me. He helps me to rejoice at times with joy unspeakable. Now I see the value of the religion of the cross. It is a religion for a dying sinner. It is all the most guilty and the most wretched can desire. Yes, I taste its sweetness and enjoy its fulness, with all the gloom of a dying bed before me; and far rather would I be the poor emaciated and emaciating creature that I am, than be an emperor with every earthly good about him, but without a God."

Notwithstanding this, however, there were those in Birmingham, and other places, who would not allow that *he preached the gospel.* And if by the gospel were meant the doctrine taught by Mr. Huntington, Mr. Bradford, and others, who fellow hard after them, it must be granted he did not. If the fall and depravity of man operate to destroy his accountableness to his Creator; if his inability to obey the law, or comply with the gospel, be of such a nature as to excuse him in the neglect of either; or if not, yet, if Christ's coming under the law frees believers from all obligation to obey its precepts; if gospel invitations are addressed only to the regenerate; if the illuminating influences of the Holy Spirit consist in revealing to us the secret purposes of God concerning us, or impressing us with the idea that we are the favorites of Heaven; if believing such impressions be Christian faith, and doubting of their validity, unbelief; if there be no such thing as progressive sanctification, nor any sanctification inherent, except that of the illumination before described; if wicked men are not obliged to do any thing beyond what they can find in their hearts to do, nor good men to be holy beyond what they actually are; and if these things constitute the *gospel*, Mr. Pearce certainly *did not* preach it. But if man, whatever be his depravity, be necessarily a free agent, and accountable for all his dispositions and actions; if gospel invitations be addressed to men not as elect, nor as non-elect, but as sinners exposed to the righteous displeasure of God; if Christ's obedience and death rather increase than diminish our obligations to love God and one another; if faith in Christ be a falling in with God's way of salvation, and unbelief a falling out with it; if sanctification be a progressive work, and so essential a branch of our salvation, as that without it no man shall see the Lord; if the Holy Spirit instruct us in nothing by his illuminating influences but what was already revealed in the Scriptures, and which we should have perceived but for that we loved darkness rather than light; and if he inclines us to nothing but what was antecedently right, or to such a spirit as every intelligent creature ought at all times to have possessed—then Mr. Pearce *did* preach the gospel; and that which his accusers call by this name is *another gospel, and not the gospel of Christ.*

Moreover if the doctrine taught by Mr. Pearce be not the gospel of Christ, and that which is taught by the above writers and their adherents be, it may be expected that the effects produced will in some degree correspond with this representation; and, is it evident to all men who are acquainted with both, and who judge impartially, that the doctrine taught by Mr. Pearce is productive of *hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, railings, evil surmisings,* and *perverse disputings;* that it renders those who embrace it *lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, false accusers, fierce, despisers of those that are good;* while that of his adversaries promotes *love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness* and *temperance? Why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right? Ye shall know them by their fruits!*

Mr. Pearce's ideas of preaching *human obligation* may be seen in the following extract from a letter addressed to a young minister who was sent out of the church of which he was pastor. "You re-

* See page 381. † Page 375.

quest my thoughts how a minister should preach *human obligation*. I would reply, do it *extensively*, do it *constantly*; but withal, do it *affectionately* and *evangelically*. I think, considering the general character of our hearers, and the state of their mental improvement, it would be time lost to argue much from the data of natural religion. The best way is, perhaps, to express duties in Scripture language, and enforce them by evangelical motives; as, the example of Christ—the ends of his suffering and death—the consciousness of his approbation—the assistance he has promised—the influence of a holy conversation on God's people, and on the people of the world—the small returns we at best can make for the love of Jesus—and the hope of eternal holiness. These form a body of arguments, which the most simple may understand, and the most dull may feel. Yet I would not neglect on *some occasions* to show the obligations of man to love his Creator—the reasonableness of the divine law—and the natural tendency of its commands to promote our own comfort, the good of society, and the glory of God. These will serve to *illuminate*, but, after all, it is *the gospel of the grace of God* that will most effectually *animate* and impel to action."

Mr. Pearce's affection to the doctrine of the cross was not merely nor principally on account of its being a system which secured his own safety. Had this been the case, he might, like others, whose religion originates and terminates in self-love, have been delighted with the idea of the grace of the Son, but it would have been at the expense of all complacency in the righteous government of the Father. He might have admired something which he accounted the gospel, as saving him from misery; but he could have discerned no loveliness in the divine law as being holy, just, and good, nor in the mediation of Christ as doing honor to it. That which in his view constituted the glory of the gospel was, that God is therein revealed as *the just God and the Saviour—just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.*

He was a lover of good men.—He was never more in his element than when joining with them in spiritual conversation, prayer, and praise. His heart was tenderly attached to the people of his charge; and it was one of the bitterest ingredients in his cup, during his long affliction, to be cut off from their society. When in the neighborhood of Plymouth, he thus writes to Mr. King, one of the deacons—"Give my love to all the dear people. O pray that He who afflicts would give me patience to endure. Indeed, the state of suspense in which I have been kept so long, requires much of it; and I often exclaim, ere I am aware, O my dear people! O my dear family, when shall I return to you again!" He conscientiously dissented from the church of England, and from every other national establishment of religion, as inconsistent with what he judged the scriptural account of the nature of Christ's kingdom: nor was he less conscientious in his rejection of infant baptism, considering it as having no foundation in the Holy Scriptures, and as tending to confound the church and the world; yet he embraced with brotherly affection great numbers of godly men both in and out of the establishment. His spirit was truly catholic: he loved all who loved our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. "Let us pray," said he in a letter to a friend, "for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper who love—not this part, or the other, but who love—HER—that is, the whole body of Christ."

He bare good will to all mankind.—It was from this principle that he so ardently desired to go and preach the gospel to the heathen. And even under his long affliction, when at times he entertained hopes of recovery, he would say, "My soul pants for usefulness more extensive than ever: I long to become an apostle to the world!" The errors and sins of men wrought much in him in a way of pity. He knew that they were culpable in the sight of God: but he knew also that he himself was a sinner, and felt that they were entitled to his compassion. His zeal for the divinity and atonement of his Saviour, never appeared to have operated in a way of unchristian bitterness against those who rejected these important doctrines; and though he was shamefully traduced by professors of another description as a mere legal preacher, and his ministry held up as affording no food for the souls of believers, and could not but feel the injury of such misrepresentations; yet he does not appear to have cherished unchristian resentment; but would at any time have laid himself out for the good of his worst enemies. It was his constant endeavor to promote as good an understanding between the different congregations in the town as the nature of their different religious sentiments would admit. The cruel bitterness of many people against Dr. Priestley and his friends, at and after the Birmingham riots, was affecting to his mind. Such methods of opposing error he abhorred. His regard to mankind made him lament the consequences of war: but while he wished and prayed for peace to the nations, and especially to his native country, he had no idea of turbulently contending for it. Though friendly to civil and religious liberty, he stood aloof from the fire of political contention. In an excellent Circular Letter to the churches of the Midland Association in 1794, of which he was the writer, he thus expresses himself—"Have as little as possible to do with the world. Meddle not with political controversies. An inordinate pursuit of these, we are sorry to observe, has been as a canker-worm at the root of vital piety; and caused the love of many, formerly zealous professors, to wax cold. The Lord reigneth, it is our place to *rejoice in his government*, and quietly wait for the salvation of God. The establishment of his kingdom will be the ultimate end of all those national commotions which terrify the earth. The wrath of man shall praise him, and the remainder of wrath he will restrain." If he could write in this manner in 1794, his seeing a hopeful undertaking, in which he had taken a more than common interest, blasted by this species of folly in 1796, would not lessen his aversion to it. From this time more than ever, he turned his whole attention to the promoting of the kingdom of Christ, cherishing and recommending a spirit of contentment and gratitude for the civil and religious advantages that we enjoyed. Such were the sentiments inculcated in the last sermon that he printed, and the last but one that he preached. (See Note at page 396.) His dear young friends who are gone to India will never forget how earnestly he charged them by letter, when confined at Plymouth, to conduct themselves in all civil matters as peaceable and obedient subjects to the government under which they lived, in whatever country it might be their lot to reside.

It was love that tempered his faithfulness with so large a portion of tender concern for the good of those whose conduct he was obliged to censure.—He could not bear them that were evil, but would set himself against them with the greatest firmness; yet it was easy to discover the pain of mind with which this necessary part of duty was discharged. It is well remembered how he conducted himself towards certain preachers in the neighborhood, who, wandering from place to place, corrupted and embroiled the churches; whose conduct he knew to be as dishonorable as their principles were loose and unscriptural: and when requested to recite particulars in his own defence, his fear and tender-

ness for character, his modest reluctance to accuse persons older than himself, and his deep concern that men engaged in the Christian ministry, should render such accusations necessary, were each conspicuous, and proved to all present, that the work of an accuser was to him a *strange work*.

It was love that expanded his heart, and prompted him to labor in season and out of season for the salvation of sinners.—This was the spring of that constant stream of activity by which his life was distinguished. His conscience would not suffer him to decline what appeared to be right. "I dare not refuse," he would say, "lest I should shrink from duty. Unjustifiable ease is worse than the most difficult labors to which duty calls." To persons who never entered into his views and feelings, some parts of his conduct, especially those which relate to his desire of quitting his country that he might preach the gospel to the heathen, will appear extravagant: but no man could with greater propriety have adopted the language of the apostle, *Whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God: or whether we be sober, it is for your cause; for the love of Christ constraineth us.*

He was frequently told that his exercises were too great for his strength; but such was the ardor of his heart, "He could not die in a better work." When he went up into the pulpit to deliver his last sermon, he thought he should not have been able to get through, but when he got a little warm, he felt relieved, and forgot his indisposition, preaching with equal fervor and freedom as when in perfect health. While he was laid aside, he could not forbear hoping that he should sometime resume his delightful work; and knowing the strength of his feelings to be such that it would be unsafe to trust himself, he proposed for a time to write his discourses, that his mind might not be at liberty to overdo his debilitated frame.

All his counsels, cautions, and reproofs, appear to have been the effect of love.—It was a rule dictated by his heart, no less than by his judgment, to discourage all evil speaking: nor would he approve of just censure unless some good and necessary end were to be answered by it. Two of his distant friends being at his house together, one of them, during the absence of the other, suggested something to his disadvantage. He put a stop to the conversation by answering: "He is here, take him aside and tell him of it by himself: you may do him good."

If he perceived any of his acquaintance bewildered in fruitless speculations, he would in an affectionate manner endeavor to draw off their attention from these mazes of confusion to the simple doctrine of the cross. A specimen of this kind of treatment will be seen in the letter, No. I, towards the close of this chapter.

He was affectionate to all, but especially towards the *rising generation.* The youth of his own congregation, of London, and of Dublin, have not forgotten his melting discourses which were particularly addressed to them. He took much delight in speaking to the children, and would adapt himself to their capacities, and expostulate with them on the things which belonged to their everlasting peace. While at Plymouth he wrote thus to one of his friends, "O how should I rejoice were there a speedy prospect of my returning to my great and *little* congregations." Nor was it by preaching only that he sought their eternal welfare: several of his letters are addressed to young persons.—See Nos. II. and III. towards the close of this chapter.

With what joy did he congratulate one of his most intimate friends, on hearing that three of the younger branches of his family had apparently been brought to take the Redeemer's yoke upon them.—"Thanks, thanks be to God," said he, "for the enrapturing prospect before you as a *father*, as a *Christian father* especially. What, *three* of a family! and these three at once! Oh the heights, and depths, and lengths, and breadths, of his unfathomable grace. My soul feels joy unspeakable at the blessed news. Three immortal souls secured for eternal life! Three rational spirits preparing to grace Immanuel's triumphs, and sing his praise! Three examples of virtue and goodness; exhibiting the genuine influences of the true religion of Jesus before the world—perhaps three mothers traing up to lead three future families in the way to heaven. O what a train of blessings do I see in this event! Most sincerely do I participate with my dear friend, in his pleasures and in his gratitude."

Towards the close of life, writing to the same friend, he thus concludes his letter:—"Present our love to dear Mrs. S. and the family, especially those whose hearts are engaged to seek the Lord and his goodness. O tell them that they will find him good all their lives, supremely good on dying beds, but best of all in glory."

In his visits to the sick he was singularly useful. His sympathetic conversation, affectionate prayers, and endearing manner of recommending to them a compassionate Saviour, frequently operated as a cordial to their troubled hearts. A young man of his congregation was dangerously ill. His father, living at a distance, was anxious to hear from him; and Mr. Pearce, in a letter to the minister on whose preaching the father attended, wrote as follows: "I feel for the anxiety of Mr. V. and am happy in being at this time a Barnabas to him. I was not seriously alarmed for his son till last Tuesday, when I expected, from every symptom, and the language of his apothecary, that he was nigh unto death. But, to our astonishment and joy, a surprising change has since taken place. I saw him yesterday apparently in a fair way for recovery. His mind, for the first part of his illness, was sometimes joyful, and almost constantly calm; but when at the worst, suspicions crowded his mind; he feared he had been a hypocrite. I talked, and prayed, and wept with him. One scene was very affecting; both he and his wife appeared like persons newly awakened. They never felt *so strongly* the importance of religion before. He conversed about the tenderness of Jesus to broken-hearted sinners; and whilst we spoke, it seemed as though he came and began to heal the wound. It did me good, and I trust was not unavailing to them. They have since been for the most part happy; and a very pleasant interview I had with them on the past day."

Every man must have his seasons of relaxation. In his earlier years he would take strong bodily exercise. Of late, he occasionally employed himself with the microscope, and in making a few philosophical experiments. "We will amuse ourselves with philosophy," said he to a philosophical friend, "but Jesus shall be our teacher." In all these exercises he seems never to have lost sight of God; but would be discovering something in his works that should furnish matter for praise and admiration. His mind did not appear to have been unfitted, but rather assisted, by such pursuits, for the discharge of the more spiritual exercises, into which he would fall at a proper season, as into his native element. If in company with friends, and the conversation turned upon the works of nature, or art, or any other subject of science, he would cheerfully take a part in it, and when occasion required, by some easy and pleasant transition, direct it into another channel. An ingenious friend once showed him a model of a machine which he thought of constructing, and by which he hoped to be able to produce a perpetual motion. Mr. Pearce having pa-

tiently inspected it, discovered where the operation would stop, and pointed it out. His friend was convinced, and felt, as may be supposed, rather unpleasant at his disappointment. He consoled him; and a prayer meeting being at hand, said to this effect: "We may learn from hence our own insufficiency, and the glory of that Being, who is *wonderful in council, and excellent in working:* let us go and worship him."

His mild and gentle disposition, not apt to give or take offence, often won upon persons in matters wherein at first they have shown themselves averse. When collecting for the Baptist mission, a gentleman who had no knowledge of him, or of the conductors of that undertaking, made some objections, on the ground that the Baptists had little or nothing to say to the unconverted. This objection Mr. Pearce attempted to remove, by alleging that the parties concerned in this business were entirely of another mind. I am glad to hear it, said the gentleman, but I have my fears. Then pray, sir, said Mr. Pearce, do not give till you are satisfied. Why, I assure you, replied the other, I think the Methodists more likely to succeed than you; and should feel more pleasure in giving them ten guineas than you one. If you give them twenty guineas, sir, said Mr. Pearce, we shall rejoice in their success; and if you give us one, I hope it will not be misapplied. The gentleman smiled, and gave him four.

His figure, to a superficial observer, would at first sight convey nothing very interesting; but on close inspection, his countenance would be acknowledged to be a faithful index to his soul. Calm, placid, and when in the pulpit especially, full of animation, his appearance was not a little expressive of the interest he felt in the eternal welfare of his audience; his eyes beaming benignity, and speaking, in the most impressive language, his willingness to *impart, not only the gospel of God, but his own soul also.*

His imagination was vivid, and his judgment clear; he relished the elegancies of science, and felt alive to the most delicate and refined sentiments; yet these were things on account of which he does not appear to have valued himself. They were rather his amusements than his employment.

His address was easy and insinuating; his voice pleasant, but sometimes overstrained in the course of his sermon; his language chaste, flowing, and inclined to the florid: this last, however, abated as his judgment ripened. His delivery was rather slow than rapid; his attitude graceful, and his countenance in almost all his discourses approaching to an affectionate smile. He never appears, however, to have studied what are called the graces of pulpit action; or, whatever he had read concerning them, it was manifest that he thought nothing of them, or of any other of the ornaments of speech at the time. Both his action and language were the genuine expressions of an ardent mind, affected, and sometimes deeply, with his subject. Being rather below the common stature, and disregarding, or rather, I might say, disapproving every thing pompous in his appearance, he has, on some occasions, been prejudged to his disadvantage; but the song of the nightingale is not the less melodious for his not appearing in a gaudy plumage. His manner of preparing for the pulpit may be seen in a letter addressed to Mr. C——, of L——, who was sent out of his church: and which may be of use to others in a similar situation. See No. IV. towards the close of this chapter.

His ministry was highly acceptable to persons of education: but he appears to have been most in his element when preaching to the poor. The feelings which he himself expresses when instructing the colliers, appear to have continued with him through life. It was his delight to carry the glad tidings of salvation into the villages wherever he could find access and opportunity. And as he sought the good of their souls, so he both labored and suffered to relieve their temporal wants; living himself in a style of frugality and self-denial, that he might have whereof to give to them that needed.

Finally, *he possessed a large portion of real happiness.* There are few characters whose enjoyments, both natural and spiritual, have risen to so great a height. He dwelt in love: and *he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.* Such a life must needs be happy. If his religion had originated and terminated in self-love, as some contend the whole of religion does, his joys had been not only of a different nature, but far less extensive than they were. His interest was bound up with that of his Lord and Saviour. Its afflictions were his affliction, and its joys his joy. The grand object of his desire was, to *see the good of God's chosen, to rejoice in the gladness of his nation, and to glory with his inheritance.* "What pleasures do those lose," says he, "who have no interest in God's gracious and holy cause!"*

If an object of joy presented itself to his mind, he would delight in multiplying it by its probable or possible consequences. Thus it was, as we have seen, in his congratulating his friend on the conversion of three of his children; and thus it was when speaking of a people who divided into two congregations, not from discord, but from an increase of numbers; and who generously united in erecting a new and additional place of worship—"These liberal souls are subscribing," said he, "in order to support a religion, which, as far as it truly prevails, will render others as liberal as themselves."

His heart was so much formed for social enjoyment that he seems to have contemplated the heavenly state under this idea with peculiar advantage. This was the leading theme of a discourse from Rev. v. 9—12, which he delivered at a meeting of ministers at Arnsby, April 18, 1797; and of which his brethren retain a lively remembrance. On this pleasing subject he dwells also in a letter to his dear friend *Birt.*—"I had much pleasure a few days since, in meditating on the affectionate language of our Lord to his sorrowful disciples: *I go to prepare a place for you.* What a plenitude of consolation do these words contain; what a sweet view of heaven as a place of *society.* It is *one place* for us all: that place where his glorified body is, there all his followers shall assemble to part no more. Where he is, there we shall be also. Oh blessed anticipation! There shall be Abel, and all the martyrs; Abraham, and all the patriarchs; Isaiah, and all the prophets; Paul, and all the apostles; Gabriel, and all the angels; and above all, Jesus, and all his ransomed people! Oh to be amongst the number! My dear brother, let us be strong in the Lord. Let us realize the bliss before us. Let our faith bring heaven itself near, and feast, and live upon the scene. Oh what a commanding influence would it have upon our thoughts, passions, comforts, sorrows, words, ministry, prayers, praises and conduct. What manner of persons should we be in all holy conversation and godliness!"

In many persons, the pleasures imparted by religion are counteracted by a gloomy constitution: but it was not so in him. In his disposition they met with a friendly soil. Cheerfulness was as natural to him as breathing; and this spirit, sanctified by the grace of God, gave a tincture to all his thoughts, conversation, and preaching. He was seldom heard without tears: but they were fre-

* See the letter to Dr. Ryland, May 30, 1796, p. 385.

quently tears of pleasure. No levity, no attempts at wit, no aiming to excite the risibility of an audience ever disgraced his sermons. Religion in him was habitual seriousness, mingled with sacred pleasure, frequently rising into sublime delight, and occasionally overflowing with transporting joy.

LETTERS REFERRED TO IN THIS CHAPTER.

No. I.

To a young man whose mind he perceived was bewildered with fruitless speculations.

"The conversation we had on our way to ———, so far interested me in your religious feelings, that I find it impossible to satisfy my mind, till I have expressed my ardent wishes for the happy termination of your late exercises, and contributed my mite to the promotion of your joy in the Lord. A disposition more or less to 'scepticism' I believe is common to our nature, in proportion as opposite systems and jarring opinions, each supported by a plausibility of argument, are presented to our minds; and, with some qualification, I admit Robinson's remark, 'that he who never doubted, never believed.' While examining the grounds of persuasion, it is right for the mind to hesitate. Opinions ought not to be prejudged any more than criminals. Every objection ought to have its weight; and the more numerous and forcible objections are, the more cause shall we finally have for the triumph: 'Magna est veritas et prevalebit;' but there are two or three considerations, which have no small weight with me in relation to religious controversies.

"The first is, the importance of truth. It would be endless to write on truth in general. I confine my views to what I deem the leading truth in the New Testament—*The atonement made on behalf of sinners by the Son of God; the doctrine of the cross; Jesus Christ and him crucified.* It surely cannot be a matter of small concern whether the Creator of all things, out of mere love to rebellious men, exchanged a throne for a cross, and thereby reconciled a ruined world to God. If this be not true, how can we respect the Bible as an inspired book, which so plainly attributes our salvation to the grace of God, *through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus?* And if we discard the Bible, what can we do with prophecies, miracles, and all the power of evidence, on which, as on adamantine pillars, its authority abides! Surely the infidel has more to reject than the believer to embrace. That book, then, which we receive, not as the word of man, but as the word of God, not as the religion of our ancestors, but on the invincible conviction which attends an impartial investigation of its evidences; that book reveals a truth of the highest importance to man, consonant to the opinions of the earliest ages, and the most enlightened nations, perfectly consistent with the Jewish economy, as to its spirit and design, altogether adapted to unite the equitable and merciful perfections of the Deity, in the sinner's salvation, and above all things calculated to beget the most established peace, to inspire with the liveliest hope, and to engage the heart and life in habitual devotedness to the interest of morality and piety. Such a doctrine I cannot but venerate: and to the *Author* of such a doctrine, my whole soul labors to exhaust itself in praise.

'Oh the sweet wonders of the cross
Where God, my Saviour, lov'd and died!'

Forgive, my friend, forgive the transport of a soul compelled to feel where it attempts only to explore. I cannot on *this* subject control my passions by the laws of logic. *God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of Christ Jesus my Lord.*

"Secondly, I consider man as a depraved creature; so depraved, that his judgment is as dark as his appetites are sensual: wholly dependent, therefore, on God for religious light, as well as true devotion: yet such a dupe to pride, as to reject every thing, which the narrow limits of his comprehention cannot embrace; and such a slave to his passions as to admit no law but self-interest for his government. With these views of human nature, I am persuaded we ought to suspect our own decisions whenever they oppose truths too sublime for our understandings, or too pure for our lusts. 'To err' on this side, indeed, 'is human;' wherefore the wise man saith, 'He that trusteth to his own heart is a fool.' Should, therefore, the evidence be only equal on the side of the gospel of Christ, I should think, with this allowance, we should do well to admit it.

"Thirdly, if the gospel of Christ be true, it should be heartily embraced. We should yield ourselves to its influence without reserve. We must come to a point, and resolve to be either infidels or Christians. To know the power of the sun, we should expose ourselves to his rays; to know the sweetness of honey, we must bring it to our palates. Speculations will not do in either of these cases; much less will it in matters of religion. *My son*, saith God, *give me thine heart.*

"Fourthly, an humble admission of the light we already have, is the most effectual way to a full conviction of the truth of the doctrine of Christ. *If any man will* DO *his will, he shall know of his doctrine whether it be of God.* If we honor God as far as we know his will, he will honor us with further discoveries of it. Thus shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord; thus, thus shall you, my dear friend, become assured that there is salvation in no other name than that of Jesus Christ; and thus from an inward experience of the quickening influences of his Holy Spirit, you will join the admiring church, and say of Jesus, 'This is my beloved, this is my friend; he is the chiefest among ten thousand, he is altogether lovely.' Yes, I yet hope, I expect to see you rejoicing in Christ Jesus; and appearing as a living witness that he is faithful who hath said, 'Seek and ye shall find; ask and receive, that your joy may be full.' S. P."

In another letter to the same correspondent, after congratulating himself that he had discovered such a mode of killing noxious insects, as should put them to the least pain and which was characteristic of the tenderness of his heart, he proceeds as follows:—"But enough of nature: how is my brother *as a Christian?* We have had some interesting moments in conversation on the methods of grace, that grace whose influence reaches to the day of adversity, and the hour of death; seasons when, of every thing beside it may be said, Miserable comforters are they all! My dear friend, we will amuse ourselves with philosophy, but Christ shall be our teacher; Christ shall be our glory; Christ shall be our portion. Oh that we may be enabled 'to comprehend the heights, and depths, and lengths, and breadths, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge!'

"Affectionately yours, S. P."

No. II.

To a young gentleman of his acquaintance, who was then studying physic at Edinburgh.

"Did my dear friend P — know with what sincere affection, and serious concern, I almost daily think of him, he would need no other evidence of the effect which his last visit, and his subsequent letters have produced. Indeed there is not a young man in the world, in earlier life than myself, for whose universal prosperity I am so deeply interested. Many circumstances I can trace, on a review

of the past fourteen years, which have contributed to beget and augment affection and esteem: and I can assure you that *every interview*, and *every letter*, still tend to consolidate my regard.

"Happy should I be, if my ability to serve you at this important crisis of human life, were equal to your wishes or my own. Your situation demands all the aid, which the wisdom and prudence of your friends can afford, that you may be directed not only to the most worthy objects of pursuit, but also to the most effectual means of obtaining them. In your professional character it is impossible for me to give you any assistance. If any general observations I can make should prove at all useful, I shall be richly rewarded for the time I employ in their communication.

"I thank you sincerely for the freedom wherewith you have disclosed the peculiarities of your situation, and the views and resolutions wherewith they have inspired you. I can recommend nothing better, my dear friend, than a *determined adherence* to the purposes you have already formed, respecting the intimacies you contract, and the associates you choose. In such a place as Edinburgh, it may be supposed, no description of persons may be wanting. Some so notoriously vicious, that their atrocity of character will have no small tendency to confirm your morals, from the odious contrast which their practices present to your view. Against these, therefore, I need not caution you. You will flee them as so many serpents, in whose breath is venom and destruction. More danger may be apprehended from those mixed characters, who blend the profession of philosophical refinement with the secret indulgence of those sensual gratifications, which at once exhaust the pocket, destroy the health, and debase the character.

"That morality is friendly to individual happiness, and to social order, no man, who respects his own conscience or character, will have the effrontery to deny. Its avenues cannot, therefore, be too sacredly guarded, nor those principles which support a virtuous practice be too seriously maintained. But morality derives, it is true, its best, its only support, from the principles of religion. 'The fear of the Lord (said the wise man) is to hate evil.'—He, therefore, who endeavors to weaken the sanctions of religion, to induce a sceptical habit, to detach my thoughts from an *ever present God*, and my hopes from a futurity of holy enjoyment, HE is a worse enemy than the man that meets me with a pistol and the dagger. Should my dear friend, then, fall into the company of those, whose friendship cannot be purchased but by the sacrifice of Revelation, I hope he will ever think such a price too great for the good opinion of men who blaspheme piety, and dishonor God. Deism is indeed the fashion of the day; and to be in the mode, you must quit the good old path of devotion, as too antiquated for any but monks and hermits; so as you laugh at religion, that is enough to secure to you the company, and the applause of the sons of politeness. Oh that God may be a buckler and a shield to defend you from their assaults! Let but their private morals be inquired into, and if they may have a hearing, I dare engage they will not bear a favorable testimony to the good tendency of scepticism; and it may be regarded as an indisputable axiom, That what is unfriendly to virtue is unfriendly to man.

"Were I to argue a posteriori in favor of truth, I should contend that those principles must be true, which (first) corresponded with general observation —(secondly) tended to general happiness—(thirdly) preserved a uniform connection between cause and effect, evil and remedy, in all situations.

"I would then apply these data to the principles held, on the one side, by the deists; and on the other by the believers in Revelation. In the application of the *first*, I would refer to the state of human nature. The deist contends for its purity and powers. Revelation declares its depravity and weakness. I compare these opposite declarations with the facts that fall under constant observation. Do I not see that there is a larger portion of vice in the world, than of virtue: that no man needs solicitation to evil, but every man a guard against it; and that thousands bewail their subjection to lusts, which they have not power to subdue, whilst they live in moral slavery, and cannot burst the chain?—Which principle then shall I admit? Will observation countenance the *deistical?* I am convinced to the contrary, and must say, I cannot be a deist without becoming a fool; and to exalt my reason, I must deny my senses.

"I take the *second* datum, and inquire, which tends most to general happiness? To secure happiness, three things are necessary:—*object*, *means*, and *motives*. The question is—Which points out the *true source* of happiness; which directs to the *best means* for attaining it; and which furnishes me with the most *powerful motives* to induce my pursuit of it? If I take a deist for my tutor, he tells me that *fame* is the object; universal *accommodation of manners to interest*, the means; and *self-love* the spring of action. Sordid teacher! From him I turn to *Jesus*. His better voice informs me, that the source of felicity is the *friendship of my God;* that *love to my Maker*, and *love to man*, expressed in all the noble and amiable effusions of devotion and benevolence, are the means; and that *the glory of God*, and *the happiness of the universe*, must be my motives. Blessed Instructer, thy dictates approve themselves to every illuminated conscience, to every pious heart! Do they not, my dear P——, approve themselves to yours?

"But I will not tire your patience by pursuing these remarks. Little did I think of such amplification when I first took up my pen. Oh that I may have the joy of finding that these (at least well meant) endeavors to establish your piety, have not been ungraciously received, nor wholly unprofitable to your mind! I am encouraged to these effusions of friendship, by that amiable *self-distrust*, which your letter expresses; a temper not only becoming the earlier stages of life, but graceful in all its advancing periods.

"Unspeakable satisfaction does it afford me to find that you are conscious of the necessity of 'first' seeking assistance from Heaven. Retain, my dear friend, this honorable, this equitable sentiment. 'In all thy ways acknowledge God, and he shall direct thy paths.'

"I hope you will still be cautious in your intimacies. You will gain more by a half-hour's intercourse with God, than the friendship of the whole college can impart. Too much acquaintance will be followed with a waste of that precious time, on the present improvement of which, your future usefulness and respectability in your profession depend. Like the bee, you may do best by sipping the sweets of every flower; but remember, the sweetest blossom is not the *hive*.

"Yours very affectionately, S. P."

"P. S. So many books have been published on the same subject as the manuscript you helped me to copy, that I have not sent it to the press."*

* The compiler believes this was an answer to Mr. Peter Edwards' *Candid Reasons*, &c. He knows Mr. Pearce did write an answer to that performance. By the effrontery of the writer he has acknowledged he was at first a little stunned; but upon examining his arguments, found it no very difficult undertaking to point out their fallacy.

No. III.

To a young lady at school, Miss A. H. a daughter of one of the members of his church.

"I cannot deny myself the pleasure which this opportunity affords me, of expressing the concern I feel for your happiness, arising from the sincerest friendship; a friendship, which the many amiable qualities you possess, together with the innumerable opportunities I have had of seeing them displayed, have taught me to form and perpetuate.

"It affords me inexpressible pleasure to hear, that you are so happy in your present situation: a situation in which I rejoice to see you placed, because it is not merely calculated to embellish the manners, but to profit the soul. I hope that my dear Ann, amidst the various pursuits of an ornamental or scientific nature, which she may adopt, will not omit that first, that great concern, the dedication of her heart to God. To this, my dear girl, every thing invites you that is worthy of your attention. The dignity of a rational and immortal soul, the condition of human nature, the gracious truths and promises of God, the sweetness and usefulness of religion, the comfort it yields in affliction, the security it affords in temptation, the supports it gives in death, and the prospects it opens of life everlasting; all these considerations, backed with the uncertainty of life, the solemnity of judgment, the terrors of hell, and the calls of conscience and of God, all demand your heart for the *blessed Jehovah*. This, and nothing short of this, is true religion. You have often heard, and often *written* on religion: it is time you should *feel* it now. Oh, what a blessedness will attend your hearty surrender of yourself to the God and Father of men! Methinks I see all the angels of God rejoicing at the sight, all the saints in heaven partaking of their joy; Jesus himself, who died for sinners, gazing on you with delight; your own heart filled with peace and joy in believing; and a thousand streams of goodness flowing from your renovated soul to refresh the aged saint, and to encourage your fellow youth to seek first the kingdom of heaven, and press on to God. But oh, should I be mistaken! Alas, alas, I cannot bear the thought. Oh thou Saviour of sinners, and God of love! take captive the heart of my dear young friend, and make her truly willing to be wholly thine!

"If you can find freedom, do oblige me with a letter on the state of religion in your own soul, and be assured of every sympathy or advice that I am capable of feeling or giving.

"Affectionately yours, S. P."

No. IV.

To a young minister, Mr. C——, of L——, on preparation for the pulpit.

"My dear brother—Your first letter gave me much pleasure. I hoped you would learn some useful lesson from the first Sabbath's disappointment. Every thing is good that leads us to depend more simply on the Lord. Could I choose my frames, I would say respecting industry in preparation for public work, as is frequently said respecting Christian obedience; I would apply as close as though I expected no help from the Lord, whilst I would depend on the Lord for assistance, as though I had never made any preparation at all.

"I rejoice much in every thing that affords you ground for solid pleasure. The account of the affection borne you by the people of God, was therefore a matter of joy to my heart, especially as I learnt from the person who brought your letter, that the friendship seemed pretty general.

"Your last has occasioned me some pain on your account, because it informs me that you have been 'exceedingly tried in the pulpit:' but I receive satisfaction again from considering, that the gloom of midnight precedes the rising day, not only in the natural world, but frequently also in the Christian minister's experience. Do not be discouraged, my dear brother: those whose labors God has been pleased most eminently to bless, have generally had their days of prosperity ushered in with clouds and storms. You are in the sieve; but the sieve is in our Saviour's hands; and he will not suffer any thing but the chaff to fall through, let him winnow us as often as he may. No one at times, I think I may say, has been worse tried than myself, in the same manner as you express; though I must be thankful it has not been often.

"You ask direction of me, my dear brother. I am too inexperienced myself to be capable of directing others; yet if the little time I have been employed for God has furnished me with any thing worthy of communication, it will be imparted to no one with more readiness than to you.

"I should advise you, when you have been distressed by hesitation, to reflect whether it arose from an inability to recollect your ideas, or to obtain words suited to convey them. If the former, I think these two directions may be serviceable:—First, endeavor to think *in a train*. Let one idea depend upon another in your discourses, as one link does upon another in a chain. For this end I have found it necessary to arrange my subjects in the order of time. Thus, for instance—If speaking of the promises, I would begin with those which were suited to the earliest inquiries of a convinced soul; as pardon, assistance in prayer, wisdom, &c.; then go to those parts of Christian experience which are usually subsequent to the former; as, promises of support in afflictions, deliverance from temptations, and perseverance in grace; closing with a review of those which speak of support in death, and final glory. Then all the varieties of description respecting the glory of heaven will follow in natural order; as, the enlargement of the understanding, purification of the affections, intercourse with saints, angels, and Christ himself, which will be *eternal;* thus beginning with the lowest marks of grace, and ascending, step by step, you at last arrive in the fruition of faith. This mode is most natural, and most pleasing to the hearers, as well as assisting to the preacher: for one idea gives birth to another, and he can hardly help going forward regularly and easily.

"Secondly, labor to *render your ideas transparent to yourself*. Never offer to introduce a thought, which you cannot *see through* before you enter the pulpit. You have read in Claude, that the best preparative to preach from a subject, is to understand it: and I think Bishop Burnet says, 'No man properly understands any thing, who cannot at *any time* represent it to others.'

"If your hesitation proceeds from a want of words, I should advise you—1. To *read good and easy authors; Dr. Watts especially.*—2 To *write a great part of your sermons*, and for a while get at least the leading ideas of every head of discourse by heart, enlarging only at the close of every thought. 3. Sometimes, as in the end of sermons, or when you preach in villages, *start off in preaching beyond all you have premeditated.* Fasten on some leading ideas; as the solemnity of death, the awfulness of judgment, the necessity of a change of heart, the willingness of Christ to save, &c. Never mind how far you ramble from the point, so as you do not lose sight of it; and if your heart be any way warm, you will find some expressions then fall from your lips, which your imagination could not produce in an age of studious application. 4. *Divest yourself of all fear.* If you should break the rules of grammar, or put in, or leave out

a word, and recollect at the end of the sentence the impropriety; unless it makes nonsense, or bad divinity, never try to mend it, but let it pass. If so, perhaps only a few would notice it; but if you stammer in trying to mend it, you will expose yourself to all the congregation.

"In addition to all I have said, you know where to look, and from whom to seek that wisdom and strength which only God can give. To him I recommend you, my dear brother, assuring you of my real esteem for you, and requesting you will not fail to pray for the least of saints, but yours affectionately, S. P."

CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS.

The great ends of Christian Biography are instruction and example. By faithfully describing the lives of men eminent for goodness, we not only embalm their memory, but furnish ourselves with fresh materials and motives for a holy life. It is abundantly more impressive to view the religion of Jesus as operating in a living character, than to contemplate it abstractedly. For this reason, we may suppose the Lord the Spirit has condescended to exhibit it first and principally in the life of Christ; and after his, that of many of his eminent followers. And for this reason, he by his holy influences still furnishes the church with now and then a singular example of godliness, which it is our duty to notice and record. There can be no reasonable doubt that the life of M.. Pearce ought to be considered as one of these examples. May that same divine Spirit who had manifestly so great a hand in forming his character, teach us to derive from it both instruction and edification!

First: *In him we may see the holy efficacy, and by consequence, the truth of the Christian religion.*—It was long since asked, *Who is he that overcometh the world, but he who believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?* This question contained a challenge to men of all religions, who were then upon the earth. Idolatry had a great diversity of species: every nation worshipping its own gods, and in modes peculiar to themselves: philosophers also were divided into numerous sects, each flattering itself that it had found the truth: even the Jews had their divisions; their Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes: but great as many of them were in deeds of divers kinds, an apostle could look them all in the face, and ask, *Who is he that overcometh the world?* The same question might be safely asked in every succeeding age. The various kinds of religion that still prevail, the Pagan, Mahometan, Jewish, Papal, or Protestant, may form the exteriors of man according to their respective models; but where is the man amongst them, save the true believer in Jesus, that overcometh the world? Men may cease from particular evils, and assume a very different character; may lay aside their drunkenness, blasphemies, or debaucheries, and take up with a kind of monkish austerity, and yet all amount to nothing more than an exchange of vices. The lusts of the flesh will on many occasions give place to those of the mind; but to overcome the world is another thing. By embracing the doctrines of the cross; to feel not merely a dread of the consequences of sin, but a holy abhorrence of its nature; and by conversing with invisible realities, to become regardless of the best, and fearless of the worst, that this world has to dispense; this is the effect of genuine Christianity, and this is a standing proof of its divine original. Let the most inveterate enemy of revelation have witnessed the disinterested benevolence of a Paul, a Peter, or a John, and whether he would own it or not, his conscience must have borne testimony that this is true religion. The same may be said of Samuel Pearce: whether the doctrine he preached found a place in the *hearts* of his hearers or not, his spirit and life must have approved itself to their *consciences*.

Secondly: *In him we see how much may be done for God in a little time.*—If his death had been foreknown by his friends, some might have hesitated whether it was worth while for him to engage in the work of the ministry for so short a period: yet if we take a view of his labors, perhaps there are few lives productive of a greater portion of good. That life is not always the longest which is spun out to the greatest extent of days. The first of all lives amounted but to thirty-three years; and the most important works pertaining to that were wrought in the last three. There is undoubtedly a way of rendering a short life a long one, and a long life a short one, by filling or not filling it with proper materials. That time which is squandered away in sloth, or trifling pursuits, forms a kind of blank in human life: in looking it over there is nothing for the mind to rest upon; and a whole life so spent, whatever number of years it may contain, must appear upon reflection short and vacant, in comparison of one filled up with valuable acquisitions, and holy actions. It is like the space between us and the sun, which, though immensely greater than that which is traversed in a profitable journey, yet being all empty space, the mind goes over it in much less time, and without any satisfaction. If "that life be long which answers life's great end," Mr. Pearce may assuredly be said to have come to his grave in a good old age. And might we not all do much more than we do, if our hearts were more in our work? Where this is wanting, or operates but in a small degree, difficulties are magnified into impossibilities; a lion is in the way of extraordinary exertion; or if we be induced to engage in something of this kind, it will be at the expense of a uniform attention to ordinary duties. But some will ask, How are our hearts to be in our work? Mr. Pearce's heart was habitually in his; and that which kept alive the sacred flame in him, appears to have been—The constant habit of conversing with divine truth, and walking with God in private.

Thirdly: In him we see in clear and strong colors, *to what a degree of solid peace and joy, true religion will raise us, even in the present world.* A little religion, it has been justly said, will make us miserable; but a great deal will make us happy. The one will do little more than keep the conscience alive, while our numerous defects and inconsistencies are perpetually furnishing it with materials to scourge us; the other keeps the heart alive, and leads us to drink deep at the fountain of joy. Hence it is, in a great degree, that so much of the spirit of bondage, and so little of the spirit of adoption prevails among Christians. Religious enjoyments with us are rather occasional, than habitual; or if in some instances it be otherwise, we are ready to suspect that it is supported in part by the strange fire of enthusiasm, and not by the pure flame of scriptural devotion. But, in Mr. Pearce we saw a devotion ardent, steady, pure, and persevering; kindled, as we may say, at the altar of God, like the fire of the temple, it went not out by night nor by day. He seemed to have learned that heavenly art, so conspicuous among the primitive Christians, of converting every thing he met with into materials for love and joy, and praise. Hence he "labored," as he expresses it, "to exercise most love to God when suffering most severely;" and hence he so affectingly encountered the billows that overwhelmed his feeble frame, crying,

"Sweet affliction, sweet affliction,
Singing as I wade to heaven."

The constant happiness that he enjoyed in God was apparent in the effects of his sermons upon others. Whatever we feel ourselves we shall ordinarily communicate to our hearers: and it has been already noticed, that one of the most distinguishing properties of his discourses was—that they inspired the serious mind with the liveliest sensations of happiness. They descended upon the audience, not indeed like a transporting flood, but like a shower of dew: gently insinuating itself into the heart, insensibly dissipating its gloom, and gradually drawing forth the graces of faith, hope, love, and joy; while the countenance was brightened almost into a smile, tears of pleasure would rise and glisten, and fall from the admiring eye.

What a practical confutation did his life afford of the slander so generally cast upon the religion of Jesus, that it fills the mind with gloom and misery! No: leaving futurity out of the question, the whole world of unbelievers might be challenged to produce a character from among them who possessed half his enjoyments.

Fourthly: From his example we are furnished with *the greatest encouragement, while pursuing the path of duty, to place our trust in God.* The situation in which he left his family, we have seen already, was not owing to an indifference to their interest, or an improvident disposition, or the want of opportunity to have provided for them; but to a steady and determined obedience to do what he accounted the will of God. He felt deeply for them, and we all felt with him, and longed to be able to assure him before his departure, that they would be amply provided for; but owing to circumstances which have already been mentioned, this was more than we could do. This was a point in which he was called to *die in faith*; and indeed so he did. He appears to have had no idea of that flood of kindness, which immediately after his decease, flowed from the religious public; but he believed in God, and cheerfully left all with him. "Oh that I could speak, said he to Mrs. Pearce a little before his death, "I would tell a world to trust a faithful God. Sweet affliction; now it worketh glory, glory!" And when she told him the workings of her mind, he answered, "O trust the Lord! If he lift up the light of his countenance upon you, as he has done upon me this day, all your mountains will become mole-hills. I feel your situation: I feel your sorrows: but he who takes care of sparrows, will care for you and my dear children."

The liberal contributions which have since been made, though they do not warrant ministers in general to expect the same, and much less to neglect providing for their own families on such a presumption; yet they must needs be considered as a singular encouragement, when we are satisfied that we are in the path of duty, to be inordinately "careful for nothing, but in every thing, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, to let our requests be made known unto God."

Finally: In him we see that *the way to true excellence is not to affect eccentricity, nor to aspire after the performance of a few splendid actions; but to fill up our lives with a sober, modest, sincere, affectionate, assiduous, and uniform conduct.* Real greatness attaches to character: and character arises from a *course of action.* Solid reputation as a merchant arises not from a man's having made his fortune by a few successful adventures; but from a course of wise economy and honorable industry, which, gradually accumulating, advances by pence to shillings, and by shillings to pounds. The most excellent philosophers are not those who have dealt chiefly in splendid speculations, and looked down upon the ordinary concerns of men as things beneath their notice, but those who have felt their interests united with the interests of mankind, and bent their principal attention to things of real and public utility. It is much the same in religion. We do not esteem a man for one, or two, or three good deeds, any farther than as these deeds are indications of the real state of his mind. We do not estimate the character of Christ himself so much from his having given sight to the blind, or restored Lazarus from the grave, as from his *going about* continually *doing good.*

These single attempts at great things are frequently the efforts of a vain mind, which pants for fame, and has not patience to wait for it, nor discernment to know the way in which it is obtained. One pursues the shade, and it flies from him; while another turns his back upon it, and it follows him. The one aims at once to climb the rock, but falls ere he reaches the summit: the other walking round it, in pursuit of another object, gradually and insensibly ascends till he reaches it: seeking the approbation of his God, he finds with it that of his fellow-Christians.

THE END.

MEMOIR OF WILLIAM MILNE.

William Milne, a native of Aberdeenshire, received from his widowed mother the best education it was in her power to bestow: she did not train him in the admonition of the Lord, yet his spirit was early and graciously visited. "Sometimes," he observes, "I used to walk home from the school, alone, over the brow of a hill, praying all the way. I was led to search the Scriptures: at this time I began the worship of God in my mother's family." At sixteen years of age he removed to a place where he had the society of some persons of eminent piety: to the lonely home of one of them, he used to go, at the hour of evening prayer, so faithfully observed by the peasantry of Scotland. In this blessed and beautiful observance, she may be said to excel all lands: her family altars, on the moor, the mountains, or the lake-side, are like so many little temples, where God is humbly and sincerely worshipped, and a vain or false sacrifice is rarely offered up. "The father was accustomed to make some remarks on the chapter read for the instruction of his children, and to prepare them for the solemn exercise of prayer: these interested me much, and showed me a beauty in the word of God, which I never saw before. From this time my enjoyments of pleasure in the world were marred, and an excellence was discovered in religion, which led me to choose it as the only object. As the family in which I lived were strangers to, and derided its power, I was very disagreeably situated. The only place I found for retirement was a sheep-cote. Here, surrounded with my fleecy companions, I often bowed the knee, on a piece of turf which I carried in with me for the purpose. Many hours have I spent there, in the winter evenings, with a pleasure to which before I was a stranger." His employments being at this time chiefly of a rural nature, afforded much opportunity through the day for spiritual improvement: books were his constant companions, and one in particular made a powerful impression; it was entitled, "The Cloud of Witnesses," containing an account of the persecution in Scotland, in the reign of Charles II. How many a gifted, as well as devoted spirit, has been nursed to excellence amidst the wilds and glens of this land—where Cameron and Cargill fled for refuge from the sword, and were faithful unto death. "Often have I sat," continues Milne, "on the brow of a hill, reading the lives of these martyrs, admiring their patience and fortitude in suffering, till I longed that God would, some time or other, honor me thus to confess his name. Having an earnest desire to devote myself to him, I was encouraged to do so in the way of a personal covenant, judging this plan agreeable to the language of the prophet, that "One shall say, I am the Lord's, and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob." I determined to adopt it, and, having retired to a place surrounded by hills on every side, I offered up myself to be ruled, sanctified, and saved by him. This was followed by much peace and happiness of mind." About three years after this, he was admitted as a member of the church at Huntley.

At the age of twenty he resolved to become a missionary, even to the most distant scenes: his mind was naturally ardent and impetuous: he used to say, "When I am convinced a thing is right, I could go through the fire to accomplish it." He consulted with his friends, who advised an application to the London Missionary Society, which was done by the two ministers of Huntley and Aberdeen: and the result was, that a committee of ministers at the latter town, was appointed to examine into his talents and qualifications for the work. On approval, he went to England, and passed through the regular course of studies at Gosport, where he was subsequently ordained, in the manner usual among dissenters. Mr. Morrison having long solicited a colleague in China, the directors proposed that station to Mr. Milne. In the mean time, he married Miss Cowie, daughter of Charles Cowie, Esq. of Aberdeen, and they sailed in September, 1812, and arrived safely in Macao in July. A few days afterwards he received an order from the Portuguese governor to leave the island. Remonstrances were in vain; and he went with some friends in a small boat to Canton, where he was soon after followed by Morrison, under whose instructions he made a rapid progress in the Chinese language. At the expiration of a year, it was judged advisable for him to make a tour through the principal settlements of the Malay archipelago, and circulate the Scriptures and tracts. Morrison, by his individual labors, having finished the Chinese translation of the New Testament, it was resolved to print 2000 copies, 10,000 tracts, and 5000 catechisms, of which the greater part was placed in Mr. Milne's charge, for distribution on his journey. He sailed in a vessel bound to Java, by way of Banca; on board were 150 Chinese emigrants, who hoped to mend their fortunes at the latter place, where numbers of people are employed in the tin mines: among these he distributed a selection of his works, and left many copies in care of the British resident. On his departure on this adventurous voyage, he left behind the following memoranda for his loved wife:—

"She is requested to keep a journal of such things as may strike her mind; what her own views and exercises may be as to God, the mission, &c.; what books she reads. To continue to write out her own history, as it will preserve many past events, and may at a future day, be profitably read by our daughter.

"2. To learn some of the dialogues by heart, in order to make the colloquial language of the Chinese familiar.

"3. To look after my books. To prepare herself as fully as she can for future usefulness.

"4. To endeavor to keep her mind easy, by trusting all to the care of God—by faith in Christ—by the hope of eternal rest.

"William Milne"

In March, 1814, Mr. Milne arrived at Batavia, and procured a lodging at a little distance from the town. Having letters of introduction to Governor Raffles, the latter furnished him with the means of travelling through the island at the expense of government, and gave him letters to the British officers, and native princes. He sent round by sea several boxes of books to the chief eastern ports, and took some large packages with him in the carriage in which he travelled. He was, as yet, but twenty-eight years of age: and the scene had changed rapidly and strangely, from the wild hills of Scotland, on whose brow he used to sit and read the "Cloud of Witnesses," and long to be like them, and the sheep-cote, where he prayed alone, to the sultry shores of Malacca and Java; where he wandered, often to the homes of princes, and distributed the "book of life." The enjoyments of learning were now his own; and he was, ere long, to found a college, whose duration and usefulness

should be very great. The life of Brainerd had been his delight in his native and pastoral scenes.

At the close of the year, Milne left Java, and in the following month again returned to China, to his family and friends. The extreme jealousy of the Chinese government rendering it imprudent for him to remain with Mr. Morrison throughout the year, Malacca, after much consideration, appeared to be the preferable centre of the mission, and preparations were made for his removal thither with his family. They arrived safely after a passage of a month, and were kindly received by the resident, Major Farquhar.

It would be unjust not to dwell for a while on the admirable labors of Morrison. The acquirement of the Chinese language, and then the painful translation of the Scriptures, had entirely occupied him during many years: his toils were the fountain of all the after success of the mission in China and Malacca. He went on gradually through the New Testament, printing small editions of its several portions, as they were revised and corrected. In March, 1813, having finished the epistles, a few copies were sent home to England, where they excited no small surprise, as well as pleasure. Several grants of money were sent to the aid of this mission, by the British and Foreign Bible Society, for the expenses of the London Missionary Society had been very great. Thus animated, the translator persevered, in the midst of many bodily infirmities; he, for some time, felt at a loss what kind of style was most proper to be adopted. In the Chinese books there are three kinds of style: that which prevails in the Woo-king and Szeskoo, is remarkably concise, and considered highly classical. Most of the works of fiction, of the lighter sort, are written in a style perfectly colloquial. The San-kwo, a work much admired in China, holds, in point of style, a middle place between these two. He at first inclined to this style, but afterwards, on seeing an imperial work, called Shingyee, designed to be read twice a month in the public halls of the different provinces, for the instruction of the people in relative and political duties, he resolved to imitate this work. Of the style of the San-kwo, the Chinese speak in raptures; it may be considered as the "Spectator" of China; and the student of Chinese, who would express himself with ease and acceptance, ought carefully to read and imitate this work. China, it is true, has scarcely any modern writers of note: but Choo-tsze, and his contemporaries, who wrote in the 12th century, were eminent authors. Choo-tsze paraphrased most of the Kiny, or classical books, and confesses himself often at a loss for the genuine sense of the text, from its extreme age and brevity. Education is far more widely diffused in China than in any other pagan country: and there is no objection to foreigners using the religions of their respective nations, whatever these may be. Those of the natives who regard no God, and treat with contempt every kind of religion, sink greatly in the estimation of their countrymen.

A tract in Chinese, published by Morrison, on "the redemption of the world," had a favorable influence on the minds of some of the people. He also published a collection of hymns, which were translations from the Psalms, as well as from the hymns of Cowper and Watts. He had long been preparing materials for a Chinese dictionary; the question now was, how it could be printed. The dictionary of 8000 characters, composed by the Romish missionaries, cost about two hundred Spanish dollars to transcribe, and it does not contain more than one-sixth of what Morrison's plan embraced. He had gone to great expense for books necessary in the compilation, and few societies for religious purposes, were adequate to the cost of the printing. The work was undertaken by the Honorable East India Company, on that scale of liberality which has often characterized the operations of that powerful body. In conformity with a resolution of a Court of Directors, Mr. P. P. Thomas was sent out with a press, types, and other requisites for printing. He arrived at Macao, and applied himself earnestly to the fabrication of moveable metal types, in which he was finally successful. The printing proceeded slowly the first year, owing to the many obstacles which attended the casting and cutting of the characters; but the successive numbers of the dictionary at last appeared, and were followed by a volume of decalogues. In herculean toil, patient and minute research, this achievement of Morrison may compare with that of Johnson; its future usefulness to the cause of Christianity in China will be incalculable. The unwearied translator pressed onward to new triumphs, and successively produced the book of Genesis, and the "Life of Christ;" the latter was generally understood by the lower classes of Chinese, and read with some degree of interest.

The establishment of a central mission in Malacca, under the care of Mr. Milne, now occupied all the attention of the two friends; the situation was more favorable than that of Canton. The first effort of the latter in Malacca, was the formation of a school: a place that had been occupied as a stable, was fitted up at a small expense; and papers, posted in different parts of the town, gave notice of it to the people. Such a thing had never been heard of in the place before; a people, in whose breast scarcely any motives but those of interest bear sway, could not believe, even for twelve months, that the children were to be taught, and furnished with books gratuitously. At last, some were gathered together; but the Chinese master could only begin on a lucky day, and each of the children must have what they called "a heart-opening cake," to prepare him for instruction. But this was not all; it is customary also for the Chinese, in all their schools, to set up the images of Confucius and of Wanchang, (the god of letters,) to which the children used to bow, and burn incense-matches every morning.—The fourteen scholars were taught reading, writing, and arithmetic, the whole in their native tongue. They were next taught Morrison's catechism, from which they learned from six to ten questions in a week; Milne afterwards expounded this. The native masters were also gradually induced to attend the public worship, with the children.

Towards the close of this year was commenced the library of the Ultra-Ganges mission, as it was called, with a small number of books, European and Chinese. On a memorial to the Governor in Council at Penang, a grant was made of ground for the erection of missionary buildings. In 1816, the Chinese scholars had increased to nearly sixty; and Mr. Milne, who had made rapid advances in the language, under the tuition of his friend, composed several tracts for their use, and translated the book of Deuteronomy. In 1817, a new range of warehouses and printing-offices were erected: and the next step, as had been previously agreed with Dr. Morrison, was to publish a magazine, called the "Chinese Gleaner." It was published quarterly, and contained extracts of the correspondence of the Eastern missionaries, and miscellaneous notices relative to the philosophy and mythology of the Indo-Chinese nations. The circulation of this work commenced at 500, and increased to 1000 or more, monthly.

Mr. Milne had now many engagements on his hands; regular services were begun on the week-days and the Sabbaths, which have ever since been

continued: every morning the Chinese domestics, workmen, and scholars, met for Christian worship. He had then a portion of the Old Testament in hand to translate, the school to superintend, and his own studies in the language to pursue. In the evening, he often spent an hour in distributing tracts through the town, and conversing with the natives; afterwards the Scriptures were read, and remarks made on them, and prayer concluded the service. The number of hearers was always small; sometimes two or three from the neighboring streets joined the regular attendants. Some came occasionally, from curiosity, or a wish to be employed; when their curiosity was satisfied, or they perceived that there was no worldly gain or pleasure to be had, they came but seldom. In dispensing instruction to the few who attended, Milne found the catechism and tracts, composed by his colleague, of great assistance. Written in a plain style, and free from the stiffness which generally adheres to translations, these tracts were easily understood, and a page or two often furnished the ground of the exhortations. Milne anxiously placed a copy before each individual, and went over the portion selected for the occasion. The same method was observed in reading the New Testament. He had seen in Scotland, his native country, the beneficial effects of this practice on the people, who keep their Bibles open in church, and follow the minister in the chapter he is explaining.

The interest and attention of the Chinese towards this service, were just as intense as those of the French audience, who gathered to listen to a friend of the writer; a man of great enthusiasm of character, formerly a captain of dragoons in the Peninsular war, and now a clergyman. His zeal led him to the neighboring capital, to convert the gay and volatile Parisians; an enterprize more daring and hopeless than that of Christianizing the Malays or Esquimaux. He procured a large and waste room in one of the most favorite and frequented streets, fitted it up as a chapel, and began to preach. A few gentlemen, whose acquaintance he had cultivated, (and whose minds he had believed open to conversion, since they not only acquiesced in his sentiments, but even showed signs of emotion,) at first formed his whole congregation. By degrees, others dropped in, attracted by curiosity, and the novelty of the thing. The contrast between minister and people was startling and perplexing: he was a tall, fine, military-looking man, and addressed them with as much fire and enthusiasm as if leading on his brigade to the charge; they listened in the most calm, gentlemanly manner possible, without the slightest derangement of look or attitude. In the midst of the discourse, a well dressed Frenchman often entered, looked curiously round for a moment, sat down on one of the forms, and fixed his eyes earnestly on the preacher, who, full of hope and fervor, proceeded till he was persuaded he had touched their hearts, and struck the very chord of repentance and awakening; at that very moment a few of the audience gracefully took a pinch of snuff, then rose, bowed politely to the preacher, and walked out: ten minutes, or a quarter of an hour, was the term to which the patience of most of them extended; and the more self-denying ones, who sat to the end, found the tax on their politeness and piety so great, that they soon ceased to attend. A whole year he thus labored, with somewhat of the patience and baffled hope of Egede amidst the snows of Greenland.

Even when the Chinese came to hear, it was no easy matter to fix their attention. Some would be talking, others laughing at the newness of the things spoken; some smoking their pipes; others, on coming in and going out, would pass through the usual routine of their ceremony, as if in the temple of their own gods, before which nothing like reverence is ever seen: so that the whole scene was somewhat of a ludicrous and confused nature. One native only had as yet been baptized in Canton, and another in Malacca: there were several candidates for admission to Christianity; but it is evident that the more efficient way of doing good to this subtle and wary people, is to convince by degrees the understanding—to enlighten the mind; and the circulation of the Scriptures, &c. are more instrumental to this end than preaching. A manuscript, containing the Acts and some of Paul's epistles, translated at a former period by some Catholic missionary, had been useful to Morrison in his translations. The Nestorians, according to Dr. Mosheim and other historians, must have been in China for a period of more than eight hundred years. In the thirteenth century, the Roman Catholic church first extended its efforts to China. An embassy, composed chiefly of ecclesiastics, was sent from Pope Nicholas IV. to the Tartars, and they are said to have erected churches in China. Francis Xavier had long and ardently contemplated the conversion of this country to the Christian faith; but he died in the midst of his hopes. Matthew Ricci, an Italian of the same order, penetrated China, preached the Catholic faith, and laid the foundation of the Romish church there. Much stress cannot be laid on any thing done for Christianity in this kingdom, since the days of Ricci. In the commencement of the seventeenth century, numbers of Jesuits, Dominicans, and Franciscans, arrived, and mingled with the gospel a great deal of the superstitions of their church, and the peculiarities of their respective orders

In July, 1816, Dr. Morrison left Macao for Pekin, in the suite of Lord Amherst: after nine years' incessant study, his health was greatly improved by this journey, which afforded facilities of acquiring much historical information, as well as an acquaintance with the various dialects of the country.—While absent, his volume of Dialogues, Chinese and English, was printed. In June, 1817, Mr. and Mrs. Milne, their health declining, sailed for China, where he occupied himself in translating the book of Judges, having previously finished that of Joshua. The two friends, being once more brought together, jointly drew up some regulations for the future conduct of the Ultra-Ganges mission. The most important and interesting of these resolutions, was that of founding an Anglo-Chinese College. A friend having given four thousand Spanish dollars, a spot upon the missionary premises at Malacca was devoted to the erection. The foundation stone of this institution was laid in November, 1818, by Major Farquhar, late English resident and commandant of Malacca, in the presence of the Dutch governor of the colony, the Hon. I. Erskine, and others. The college stands in an open and airy situation, close to the western gate of the town, and commands a fine view of the roads, and of the sea. Besides a large library and hall, it contains accommodations for a number of students. The chief objects of this institution are, the cultivation of Chinese and English literature, and the diffusion of Christianity in the countries and islands which lie to the eastward of Pulo-Penang. It owes its origin to the indefatigable and generous Morrison, who has devoted the sum of one thousand pounds to the erection of the house, and has further promised one hundred pounds annually, during the first five years. The college is placed under the care of a president, a board of trustees, and a committee, who, with the concurrence of the founder, have the entire management of its affairs. The treasurer and secretary of the London Missionary

Society for the time being, are to be perpetual members of the board of trustees. The first topic of disputation given in the college of Fort William, was the following:—"It is easier to diffuse the literature and science of the western nations among the natives of India, by translating European books into their own tongue, than by instructing them in the European languages." The rising college was greatly indebted to the personal cares of Milne, who about this time received the gratuitous diploma of D. D. from the University of Glasgow. At the laying of the foundation stone, he delivered an admirable speech.

In the year 1819, he had to mourn the loss of his wife: left alone with several children, he applied with increased ardor to his studies, as the best relief to sorrow. In this year he finished the translation of the historical books of the Old Testament. His health now began to decline: the directors were desirous that he should seek a more propitious climate; he took a voyage to the Prince of Wales' Island, where, finding the heat too oppressive, the governor of Malacca sent the Nautilus to convey him home. He suffered extreme pain; but death came rapidly to his release, and, with great composure of mind, he yielded his life at the age of 37.

After the decease of his friend, Dr. Morrison paid a visit to England, where he earnestly sought to promote the cultivation of the Chinese language and literature, and gave instruction to several students. The prosperity of the Anglo-Chinese college, was the fervent desire of this learned and eminent man, who is considered to be the first Chinese scholar of his day. "The gospel," he observes in his address to the British public, "can be preached to this people, where tens and hundreds of thousands of them dwell under Christian Protestant governments, and under Malayan governments, which do not interfere to prevent instruction being given to the Chinese. In Java, there is a large population of the latter; as well as in the British settlements, and at Rhio, Borneo, and other places in the archipelago. It is not a field of labor that is wanting, but reapers to enter into, and labor in that field. The late Dr. Milne proved at Malacca, what has been proved every where else, that prejudices will give way to sincere benevolence, persevered in. The Chinese in Malacca, now allow their sons to be taught the principles of the Christian religion; and were proper teachers to make the experiment, they would allow their daughters also to receive instruction from Christian females. Reading, to a certain extent, may be considered as a common attainment throughout the whole of China, and in the colonies; also in Corea, Japan, Loochoo, and Cochin-China: this fact makes the press an important instrument."

On his return to China, this most valuable man resumed his various labors: he composed and printed three volumes, viz. an Introduction to the Reading of the Scriptures; an Epitome of Church history and Prophecy; and Aids to Devotion, taken from the English Liturgy. He has also undertaken a dictionary of the provincial dialect of Canton, which is now printing at the Honorable Company's press. Leang-a-fa, the native convert and preacher, has removed to a village 100 miles from Canton, where he seeks every opportunity to be useful to his countrymen.

The Anglo-Chinese college at Malacca has now twenty-six Chinese students; the senior students apply to Christian theology, mathematics, geography, and the English language; there are eight candidates for admission: the usual literary exercises and religious instruction are continued daily. Several works have issued from the college press, and others are in progress. Government allows 100 dollars a month in aid of this useful and interesting institution. Sir George Staunton, in addition to his former munificent donation, has placed another sum at the disposal of Dr. Morrison. Some of the students have executed translations of Chinese books into English, and of English works into their own language, which do them much credit.

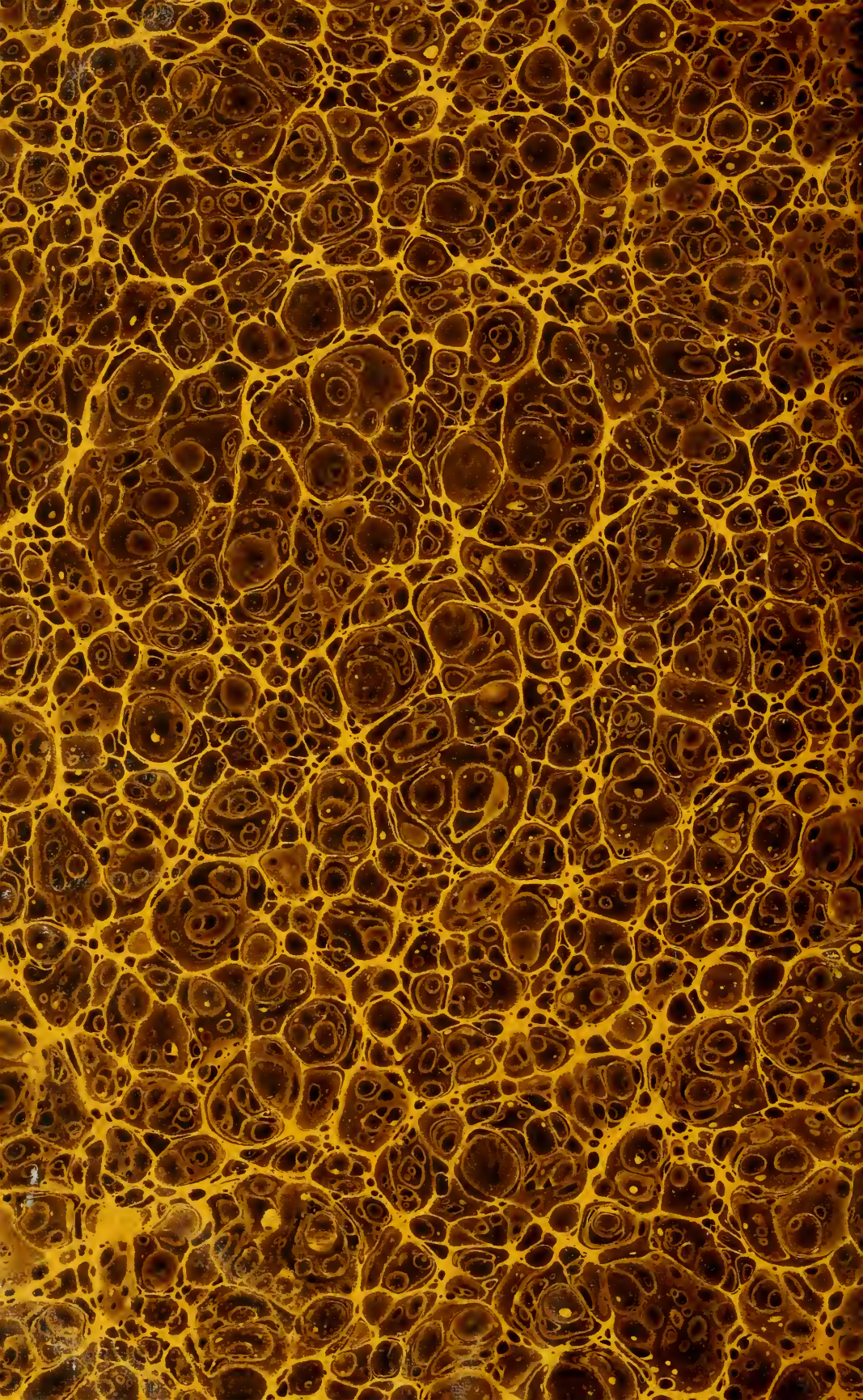
"The students, in general," observes Morrison, "cheerfully read and commit to memory our books; and when we go out to speak to the people, they beg to be permitted to accompany and assist us: also, on the Thursday evenings, when we go to meet the people in the temple. Most of their leisure hours are spent with us. Should it please our gracious God to bring them to the knowledge of himself, what happy results might be expected from their labors!" In behalf of this institution, its learned and disinterested founder appeals not only to the public, but to men of science and literature: he justly considers it, not only as the chief agent to promote the diffusion of Christianity in China, but also to lay open the mine of the history, philosophy, and literature of that country. "While the propagation of the principles of Divine revelation is its final object, it is hoped that, by promoting the intellectual intercourse of Europe and eastern Asia, the temporal happiness of man will be advanced." The amount of subscriptions received in England for its support, in 1828, was £1202.

There are also two schools at Malacca, one Malay and one Tamul, under the care of the missionaries: both are supported by government. In the native female school, opened by Miss Newell, there are twenty pupils: under her excellent care, there is also a free school, which is patronized by Lady Garling, and contains seventy girls. This young lady, a relative probably of Harriet Newell, has published "An Abstract of Geography" for the use of her schools: she has also prepared twelve discourses, adapted to the circumstances and feelings of Indian children.

Singapore is a station, where there is a chapel, and regular preaching to the Malays and Chinese: the teachers enter the houses, temples, &c. and a spirit of inquiry is excited among the people; one of them, Mr. Tomlin, lately made a journey to Bankok, the capital of Siam, where he was well received: crowds of people thronged his apartments, to procure copies of the Chinese Scriptures and tracts, in his possession.

At Penang and Java, two promising stations, there is a general demand for the Scriptures in various languages—Arabic, Persian, &c. A fresh supply of Malay Bibles and Testaments was sent out. The Malay services on the Sabbath, and the schools, were well attended. The lithographic press, to which Mr. Medhurst has paid much attention, as being in every respect preferable to any other for works in the Eastern language, is now at work. At this press, some thousands of books have already been printed. A fount of Javanese types has also been executed, the expense of which was defrayed by Mr. Bruckner, formerly a missionary of the Society. The Ultra-Ganges mission, as it is called, has thus a very wide and arduous field of exertion, hitherto untried by any laborer.

While the life of Morrison is spared to this mission, a high and increasing interest will attend its progress: the zeal of his companions in the cause, is great—the success is slow, and painfully won: a few have followed Milne to an early grave.



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